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Volume I

Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Early Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume I



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Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume I

*These lectures and satsangs were given by Swami Satyananda
Saraswati during the first international nine-month Yoga
Teacher Training Course conducted at Bihar School of Yoga,
Munger in 1967.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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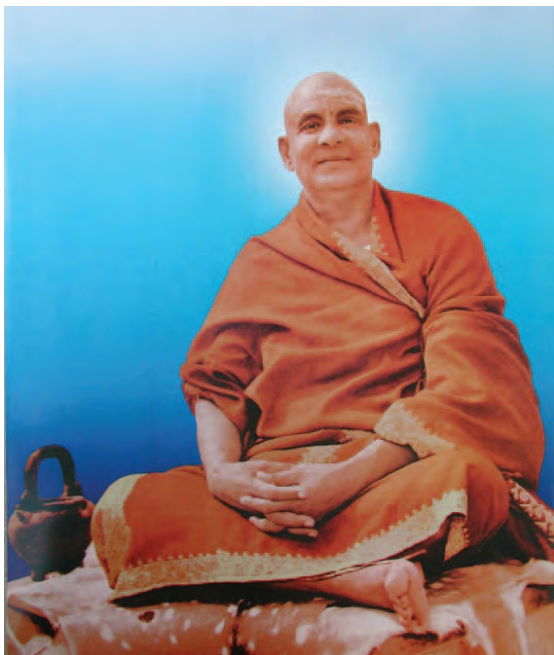
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

Contents

1. Higher Consciousness	1
2. Drugs, Rebirth and Marriage	12
3. Aura and Astrology	19
4. Death and the Nature of God	31
5. Education and Anarchy	37
6. The Practice of Trataka	41
7. Other Forms of Trataka	54
8. Kali, Kundalini and the Unconscious	62
9. Hatha Yoga	69
10. The Tradition of Kriya Yoga	73
11. Japa Yoga and Symbol	78
12. The Unrecorded Life of Christ in India	85
13. The Stages of Japa	94
14. The Effects of Japa	100
15. Japa Anushthana	107
16. Mantra, Rishi and Devata	115
17. Samadhi and Psychic Breathing	125
18. Japa with a Mala	132
19. Japa Yoga	144
20. Conclusion of Japa Yoga	153
21. Thought Transmission	157
22. Prana Vidya	171

23. Meditation on Prana	178
24. Pranic Healing	188
25. Prana	196
26. The Practice of Prana Vidya	203
27. Sanskrit Texts	211
28. Antar Trataka and Chidakash Dharana	227
29. World Brotherhood and Bhakti Yoga	235
30. Sanskrit and Ethics	245
31. Prana Vidya	253
32. Yoga and Education	259
33. The Bhagavad Gita: Pilgrimage towards Liberation	267
34. Brahmacharya	276
35. The Bhagavad Gita: An Esoteric Interpretation	292
36. The Guru-Disciple Relationship	300
37. Mind and Meditation	312
38. Ahimsa and Criminals	325
39. Jnana Yoga, Kundalini and Love	336
40. Yoga Therapy in Society	348
41. Karma and Destiny	356
42. God, Reality and Mother	373
43. The Subconscious Mind	378
44. Seclusion	384
45. Sleep	393
46. Organization	399

1

Higher Consciousness

26 July 1967

What is the superconscious state?

The first thing to remember is that superconsciousness is not a state of mind. It is not a physical state, a state of sensory experience or a psychic state – it is spiritual. Sleep is the last psychic state. In sleep the mind does not function. Mind functions only up to sleep, that is the unconscious, beyond that the mind does not function.

In order to clarify this point, the word ‘super’ should be removed and the word ‘conscious’ should be spelled with a capital C. It is a Conscious state in the sense that you are not conscious of your body, your name, your religion, your nationality or any object of physical existence, but you are aware. So superconsciousness is consciousness spelled with a capital C in which there is no form of consciousness pertaining to your body, mind, religion or physical existence, but there is consciousness. That Consciousness is superconsciousness. After that there is nothing.

When that particular state of Consciousness is continued steadily for many years, the normal activities of the mind become absolutely flat. The senses find themselves incapable of functioning. The mind finds itself incapable of functioning. The physical organs also find it very difficult to function. As a result, the body, senses and

mind are annihilated, producing a state which is called videhamukti.

Videhamukti is translated as a disembodied state, but what it means is a state of liberation, a state of the freedom of consciousness from physical and mental attachment, where the body is incapable of housing the soul. Then a state of unconsciousness takes place in which one becomes absolutely inactive physically and within twenty-one days, or sometimes even a little earlier, the soul leaves the body. After that the soul is not born again. There is no reincarnation because one has no desires and no will to live. One has no wants. One hankers for nothing. All the karmas are exhausted, all the desires are fulfilled and therefore one is not born again, but becomes one with Cosmic Consciousness.

Does he keep his individuality?

No, he submerges himself completely. It is something like a river flowing and flowing until it meets the ocean and becomes one with it. When the river meets the sea, the water that pours into it is not lost. The water remains, but its identity, its individuality, is gone. We can't say this portion is Ganga and that portion is Yamuna.

Is that almost like suicide?

That is what some philosophers have said, but there is a big difference. You see, suicide is that particular psychic state in which the man has not achieved the desires of his life. Due to dissatisfaction he attempts consciously or subconsciously to leave the body, but he is reborn because he has not fulfilled his desires. A videhamukta has fulfilled everything.

Has he the right to leave his body?

Yes. The point is this. Suppose you have a piece of ice in your hand and gradually it melts. When it melts completely, how can you have the existence of the ice block? In the same manner what is individuality? Individuality consists of human aspirations, ambitions and desires. When they are no more,

how can individuality exist because the basis of individuality is desires?

Aren't desires part of a natural process.

Well, it appears to be natural, but once we transcend this particular mental state where we stand now, they may seem absolutely hopeless, absolutely fake.

Is jivanmukti a slightly lower state than videhamukti?

Yes. Videhamukti is disembodied liberation, and *jivanmukti* is liberation in life. The jivanmukta maintains his individuality because of one desire – the desire for the upliftment of all living beings. A jivanmukta is free from all selfish desires. He doesn't want to achieve, accomplish, accumulate or hold anything for himself. Behind whatever he does or thinks there is only one motive – compassion for all. It is because of that sankalpa or desire that he maintains his individual status and after his death he is reborn again.

Then can he choose where, when and under what circumstances he will be born?

Yes. Only the jivanmukta can select his rebirth, nobody else.

When the jivanmukta is reborn, does he have something like a conscious birth, knowing from childhood why he is here?

Yes. He remembers everything of his past. It is somewhat like Buddha – at the time of his self-realization he remembered all his previous twenty-four births.

Is the natural process to become a jivanmukta before a videhamukta?

Yes. One has to become a jivanmukta first and a videhamukta finally. There is no option. That is the natural way. From jivanmukti the process of evolution makes a curve and a process of involution begins. It is not evolution. Jivanmukti is the highest point of self-evolution and from

there on, a process of involution sets in, not back in the same order, but in a different order. Instead of coming down through the same line by which he had proceeded on the path of evolution, he makes a little circle. That is to say, we consider life to be a circle, starting from one point and evolving this way. Gradually we reach jivanmukti or the superconscious state and, from there, a process of involution sets in up to videhamukti. This is the period where the old individuality is lost.

From videhamukti he becomes one and a fresh process of evolution starts. He becomes one with the cosmos and, from the cosmic nature, the jiva is born again and again, but not the same 'I'. It is something like the Ganga meeting the ocean and, from the ocean, the monsoon rising up. It is not necessarily the same Ganga water.

Are the ten orders of sannyasa symbolic of the ten rays of creation the theosophists speak about?

Not exactly, but we can include this interpretation. The organization of sannyasins into ten orders was done according to their *samskaras*, their inherent nature. The order is given according to the inner attitude of the sannyasin and also according to the height of evolution he has reached.

If the sannyasin does not find himself capable of living in a cottage by himself, maybe because of old age or because of past inhibitions (not every sannyasin is self-realized), then he is asked to go to a monastery or is given charge of a monastery. There he enjoys all the securities and friendships, and thus he is able to maintain the state of evolution in himself.

Suppose a man belonging to a particular monastery does not find monastic life useful. He does not like the atmosphere or the security and he has no respect for property, money and disciples. He wants to live all alone in the mountains. It does not matter if a cobra comes and bites him. It does not matter if he cannot get milk and fruit on time. It does not matter whether he can get medical treatment, but he wants to live in the forest. According to that his order has to be decided. This

is what has been written in the ancient scriptures. The order is to be given to a sannyasin, judging by his inner capacities, desires and state of evolution.

Guru gives the order. He knows what his disciples want. Many sannyasins do not wish to have disciples and are disdainful of anybody who makes disciples. According to the strict tradition of sannyasa, if a sannyasin who is practising austerities in the mountains or anywhere, goes back down to the plains to serve humanity by opening monastic organizations or yoga ashrams, preaching, making disciples or building hospitals, he is considered to have fallen from yoga; he is known as *yoga bhrashtha*. They say, "This man did austerities, but some of his desires remained to be fulfilled, so he has gone down." Of him many things may be said: he is great, he is a scholar, he is wise, but he has not attained.

There was one Swami Tapovanam, living in Uttarkashi above Rishikesh. He was over eighty. I went there and asked him, "Swamiji, I want to remain at Uttarkashi or nearby under your guidance. Will you please arrange quarters for me?" He said, "No, Satyananda. Become an editor, secretary, manager or preacher. Work out your karma." He did not allow me to remain there. This was a man who had knowledge, who knew the secret of karma, but the other sannyasins who are orthodox and narrow-minded, will tell you, "All this is not necessary. Leave those things and come to live here." I told one of those mahatmas, "What about my karmas? If I come here, I will also bring a typewriter!"

How does one know that one's karmas are finished?

The moment the karmas are finished they leave a man automatically so that, even if he wants to do karma in the form of duties, the chances are practically nil. He does make karma. Then a sort of famine takes place so far as desires are concerned. He is unable to have any desires. He wants to think, he wants to desire, but he cannot. He starts to do something, but half way through it he stops, he cannot go further. His capacity for desiring is finished.

There are also some people in the world who have desire, but because of certain fears, suppressions and shocks that they have received or that are still in their unconscious which they don't know about consciously, they do not desire. Although the karmas and desires are there they are in a suppressed state.

What is a bhakta's way of eliminating or not creating new karmas?

The karmas can be exhausted by offering them to God and, before you do a deed, realizing that the doer is someone else. You are only an instrument, the medium to carry out the action. Another way is to take everything in life – the state of spiritual evolution and the state of mental or moral degeneration, prosperity, poverty, calamity and happiness, as the will of God. The bhakta does not wish for what is good, nor does he hate anything bad that comes along. That is the attitude of a bhakta, but of course they do not all have it.

In bhakti philosophy the emotional aspect of an individual is divided into two levels – the lower and the higher. The lower grade of bhakti is called *apara bhakti*. The higher state of emotion is called *para bhakti*, the supreme or transcendental bhakti. So, in *apara bhakti* we have worshipping God, visiting pilgrimage places, going to mahatmas and saints, and reading the scriptures in which the glories of God are described.

These are the things which every man is supposed to do, so that he receives enough inner inspiration and the mind becomes purified and one-pointed. Then one will be able to discern for oneself that all the manifestations in this life are creations of the Divine and 'I' am only an actor. This revelation comes after practising *apara bhakti* for many years, provided one does it correctly. Ultimately, when this realization dawns, then *para bhakti* begins. After that, one takes his life, not as one's own, but as a manifestation of the Divine will. The karma I do is Divine will, the sufferings I undergo are Divine will, the pleasures I enjoy are Divine will. That becomes the realization and it is called *para bhakti*.

If apara bhakti is done unselfishly, it will culminate in para bhakti, but if apara bhakti is done selfishly, like going to the temple or church and praying with a particular motive, that is called selfish bhakti. Gradually one must understand that it is not fair to pray to God all the time for a wife, children, money, health, etc. This realization will finally come and then one will start unselfish bhakti, thinking that everything belongs to Him.

Ultimately, by this process, while doing all the karmas in the world, the bhakta does not accumulate the results, impressions or influences. He becomes free of karma, of prarabdha, but this is said only of the highest bhaktas, not of those who worship in the temples.

Would you elaborate on the purpose of the four ashramas?

This particular provision is meant for people of the world who are not spiritually evolved and must therefore go through the different stages of life, such as being a *brahmacharya* or celibate, *grihastha* or householder, *vanaprastha* or hermit, but there are some people who have already undergone these stages in their former life and for them this rule does not apply.

Take Shankaracharya, for example. At the age of eight he took sannyasa. At the age of sixteen he finished writing commentaries in Sanskrit on all the philosophical texts of Hinduism, the Upanishads, the *Gita*, etc., as well as writing his own adwaita vedanta. From the age of sixteen to thirty-two, he moved throughout India, from north to south, with only one objective: to bring all the Buddhists into the fold of Hinduism by debate, discussion and defeating them in arguments.

Do those people who have fulfilled all the ashramas in their previous lives, and are now striving for spiritual realization in this life, remember all the preceding ashramas?

No. One who has finished all his karmas in his previous life, who has fulfilled all his duties as a brahmachari, as

a grihastha and as a vanaprastha, and now, in this life, becomes a sannyasin through the process of evolution, does not remember his past. Only a person who has finished everything in his previous life, even sannyasa, and who has attained the highest state as a sannyasin in his previous life – when he is reborn, after attainment of jivanmukti and before videhamukti, then he remembers all his preceding lives.

For example, you have undergone the life of a celibate, a householder and a hermit, then suppose death comes. When you are reborn, you develop desires for sannyasa from the very beginning, but you don't remember all your preceding lives. This is one example. Another example is, say you have completed all the four orders of life up to sannyasa and as a sannyasin you have achieved a very high state of jivanmukti, after that you die, so you are reborn – you have got to be reborn. At that time there is the memory of your preceding lives as clearly as the memory of your past days. You remember everything.

Except for a jivanmukta, nobody remembers his past lives in sequence. Shankara remembered his past life. Ramana Maharshi remembered his last life. Buddha remembered his past life. Vivekananda was also aware of his past life. Like that, all the people who have left their bodies after the attainment of jivanmukti in this life remember, but a sannyasin or any other person, having gone through the life of brahmacharya, grihastha and vanaprastha, does not.

Some children do remember and recollect their past birth. They say that they were born this way and that way, but they are not fully conscious of what they are speaking. They say these things from a slightly different psychic state than ours. A little change in the psychic realm takes place and they undergo a process of involution in their psychic state. That process is very subtle and parents don't notice it. At that time they just remember their past life and speak out subconsciously without knowing consciously what they are really saying. That is what I call subconscious recollections.

Can one act subconsciously even if one is awake?

Yes, one can and does act subconsciously even if one is awake. Even now, we are behaving, thinking, working, consciously and subconsciously also. For the subconscious action it is not at all necessary that you should go beyond the waking state.

What is the difference between the remembering of past lives in the case of young boys and girls, and the remembering of past lives in the case of a jivanmukta?

There is a difference. Those children speak about their former lives subconsciously, not at all aware of what they are speaking, while one who has attained jivanmukti in his previous life remembers all his past births consciously and knows that he is remembering. He does not forget them at all.

Is that remembering like a vision or a dream?

Yes. These boys and girls remember their past lives as dreams, and the great men remember their past lives as visions. While the boys and girls forget after a year or two, a jivanmukta always remembers.

Knowledge is inside. Outside objects only serve the purpose of external stimuli. We don't learn anything from outside. This is one school of philosophy. Knowledge is subjective, but its act of manifestation depends upon an objective event.

Are there any external stimuli for the acceleration or manifestation of knowledge?

I think it is said by all the thinkers that one gains all knowledge from within through the practice of yoga. Without depending upon the external environment and external stimuli, one is able to comprehend all dimensions of knowledge within oneself. We can gain the knowledge of any part of the body and any part of the world, because the knowledge of the world, the formation of the world, the microcosmic form of this world, is within ourselves.

In this body, or rather I should say, in this personality, there is a miniature universe, and at the same time, any event that is taking place in any part of the world, is simultaneously taking place within you. If one is able to tune oneself into that great depth of one's own existence, one will be able to draw all knowledge from within oneself and through oneself. So it is that knowledge always comes from within, never from without.

People, however, do not get all knowledge in one birth, not because their knowledge within is inadequate, but because the container of the knowledge, or rather the medium by which we express the knowledge, or the body in which we develop the knowledge, is not adequate, not competent enough for attaining that higher knowledge. Still, in every incarnation we do develop some knowledge.

This is the ultimate truth. We receive thoughts from other people, so we think, but, in fact, everything is known within. The entire process is subjective; it appears to be objective, but it is subjective. So we do not have to understand others' thoughts. What he is thinking is already in me. He is thinking at two different places – within himself and within myself.

If an event is taking place somewhere in Japan, it is also taking place within me at the same time. So events are occurring at two different places. Therefore, instead of tuning myself to the event out there, I tune myself to the event within me. For that, a fundamental faculty has to be developed – the ability to withdraw oneself instantaneously, within a moment's notice. It is like switching off the light and the light goes out. It does not occur at two different places.

If you are able to withdraw yourself at will at any time, instantaneously, you will be able to tune yourself with all the happenings anywhere else. This is one thing, but then there are so many things happening in the world and if we are supposed to know all these things within ourselves, then it will be a confusion in telepathy. It will be something like cosmic telepathy, a radio adjusted to one meter, producing sounds of different meters; then you can't understand anything.

Sometimes, in certain cases, these things do actually happen. So, as far as telepathy is concerned one has to become especially psychic and somebody else has to become the operator. Say you become the psychic medium and I become the operator then, when I ask you what this man is thinking, you will be able to perceive it without difficulty, otherwise it is not possible, but if you try to know what he is thinking for yourself, you will find it difficult. There should be a psychic medium.

Are practices in telepathy and things like that obstacles on the path of evolution?

Yes, for those people who are practising telepathy and other such sciences, it is impossible to go ahead with their spiritual evolution. They have to transcend these psychic phenomena and only then can they enter into the spiritual domain.

Is Babaji a siddha?

Yes, he is a siddha. Much has been said about him.

And Atreya?

He is a rishi.

What is the meaning of rishi?

The word *rishi* means 'seer'. A rishi must be a siddha and jivanmukta. He is above psychic states. The state of rishihood is not a psychic state, it is a spiritual state.

2

Drugs, Rebirth and Marriage

27 July 1967

What is your opinion about LSD and its effects on the individual and society?

LSD is very dangerous. It does not help in spiritual evolution. It only creates hallucinatory states by paralyzing the brain nerve which is responsible for reasoning. It paralyzes sahasrara and stimulates ajna chakra, as a result of which conscious visualizing is completely absent and the whole process of thinking is slowed down.

Ordinarily our thoughts are moving like a reel of film in a definite sequence, say at about forty frames per second, but when we take LSD the reel of thoughts starts moving very slowly. As a result, you are able to see every thought and behold every mental image. The process of thinking becomes slow when you take any narcotic and hopelessly slow when you take LSD.

For those who think a lot, who have developed their intellectual capacity, who are self-conscious by temperament, LSD is very dangerous, but for those who have not developed their intellectual faculty so much, it is not so harmful. It is true that in one of Patanjali's yoga sutras, it is written that *siddhi* or the psychic state can be obtained by five methods and one of these is *aushadi* or herbal medicine. With the use of certain herbs one can change the structure of one's psychic consciousness, but not by LSD, Cannabis *indica* or Indian hemp.

There is one creeper known as soma which can be used to heighten one's perception, however, it is only known today by a few Ayurvedic doctors. According to the tradition, that creeper is collected on the full moon day then it is crushed, put into a wooden pot, sealed and placed underneath the ground for fifteen days. After that, the juice is extracted and many more ingredients are added such as raisins, almonds, poppy seeds, etc. It is drunk by those who are brahmin, of the intellectual class and who from birth observe strict discipline regarding life, marriage, diet and many other things.

Soma is forbidden to the military, merchant and labour classes. When the military class came into power, they thought they could use it, but most of them went mad. So, soma is to be taken only by those who are spiritually minded and not by evil, cruel, emotional and undisciplined people, for whom it will do more harm than good. Soma, which is almost completely lost today, is a spiritual liquor that is referred to many times in the vedic texts. It was used by the brahmins on the occasion of a particular *homa* or fire worship, and thus they entered into spiritual ecstasy.

There is another drink called thandai which is used by every Indian even today. It contains almonds, poppy seeds, rose petals and other things, including Indian hemp. A paste is made with all these ingredients which takes a full day to grind and prepare. In the evening it is offered to Lord Shiva in the temple and then the whole family takes the mixture. Within five minutes of taking the thandai, they go to the toilet and take a cold bath. After that, they eat sweets, avoiding sour things like lemon, curd, etc., and then they sit for the whole night full of ecstasy.

Thandai should be prepared with sanctity and care. It is taken during Shivaratri, the darkest night of the year which is dedicated to Lord Shiva, and on Holi, the festival of joy and colour, both of which fall some time in the months of February and March. Patanjali was aware of the medicinal properties of certain herbs by which intellectual restlessness and oscillation

of the human mind could be controlled, and the pineal gland or ajna chakra could be stimulated. That is the reason why a particular state can be achieved by these medicines, but that does not mean they can be taken at any time.

On the seventh day of the new year of the Hindu calendar, or during the time of the waxing moon, preferably on a Thursday (and it should be a bright night), they go to the garden and collect hemp leaves. These are first dried, and the next day they wash them and again dry them in the shade. Then they put the leaves on a copper plate. Finally, small balls are made which can be preserved for years. Ayurvedic doctors use it for all stomach disorders and it is also used for meditation.

Another herb which has powerful effects on the human mind is datura. In India, during the month of Shravana (July–August), Indian ladies fast every Monday and they offer the flower of datura to Lord Shiva. This datura is one of the ingredients of LSD. Lysergic acid is extracted from datura. It is also used for medicinal purposes.

Do these medicines help in individual spiritual elevation or by repeated use can they develop our psyche?

How can they help in our spiritual evolution unless we have purified our mind, improved our habits, changed the angle of our vision and reoriented our individual philosophy? Unless we have accomplished these things, where is the spiritual evolution? Here, in this yoga ashram, you are not only trying to train your psyche, you are also changing your entire philosophy and pattern of thinking, acting and living. This is more important and if you are not able to learn this here in a yoga institute, then life will teach you.

Are there any harmful effects from LSD if it is taken for scientific experiments?

There are no positive effects on the nervous system. To be frank, one need not take any herb or medicine for individual spiritual progress.

How does disease develop and what is the point of origin?

First of all, the seed of disease is in the mind. The mind prepares the body for disease. It withdraws all the power of resistance and then helps in the development of the disease in a particular part of the body. This is so because the mind is able to stimulate the glandular secretions. The mind is in a position to accept or reject the bacterial infection also. The mind is capable of resisting it, thus rejecting it. If one is very strong mentally and does not harbour thoughts of fear at all then even cancer can be cured.

Fever, typhoid, smallpox, malaria, etc., are diseases. An accident is not a disease, but even after injury, if one thinks about it too much, then it becomes a disease. There is a formation of pus, it gets septic and other complications arise. If a snake has bitten you and you don't know it, even if it is poisonous, you are not going to die, but if the snake has not bitten you and it is not poisonous, but you are mindful of it, then you are going to die. Cancer is such a disease. Its seed is in the mind. It is born of the mind and seen in the body.

Why do these diseases have their seeds in the mind? Is it connected with samskaras and karma?

This is due to the inhibitions of man which he inherits from his parents, environment, friends and associations. If people who have these inhibitions hear too much about cancer they will develop it. If someone dies of high blood pressure many people in the same town will develop high blood pressure on the same day. Many of the experts and researchers who did long term investigations into the nature of different diseases like leprosy, TB, cancer, etc., died of these diseases because their minds were completely permeated by the thought of cancer or TB. Yes, it is true that when a particular thought gets into the mind, it creates a frequency there, and then it begins to manifest. It takes on a form.

Is there any connection between the occurrence of hereditary diseases and the law of karma?

By the law of karma one becomes subject to a hereditary disease. The law of karma brings one to that family and one inherits those characteristics, impressions and traditions. If one has been leading a life of austerity and purity, then one will become part of a family or dynasty which can fulfil unfulfilled spiritual aspirations, where one receives cooperation in all spiritual endeavors and family members live together under strict moral discipline.

What is the factor responsible for rebirth in a particular family?

One's own desire at the time of death. It is the last desire, the last ambition, the last aspiration which carries one on after death and which places one in a family at the time of rebirth. The last desire is the sum total of one's life. Suppose one is seeking spiritual aspirations and many other things side by side. At the time of death only the most prominent idea in life will come to mind, "I must realize." It is said in *Gita*, "Having the last thought in his mind, he leaves the body and guided by the thought re-enters another body. There, he fulfils and exhausts his karmas, enjoys and suffers, and again he becomes old, aspires for some particular thing and with that thought he dies."

Is it true that one takes birth in the same family or vicinity?

Yes. There is a law. Within one year of the death of the person, any pregnancy which takes place in the family is sure to be that dead man reborn. So, among Hindus, when a particular person dies in the family, marital relations are absolutely cut off for one year.

What is the deciding factor for rebirth?

There is some energy which keeps the records of individual karma. According to that the birth is decided. We call that

cosmic force Brahma. Well, I personally feel that in the individual himself there is a conscious being which goes with the individual soul after death and decides which particular body he should inhabit. This is the conscious principle in man himself.

What is your concept of marriage?

I believe that marriage is a stepping stone for the spiritual evolution of the individual soul, for the exhaustion of human complexes, for the relaxation of human desires and ambitions. Also, marriage is fixed to enable a man to find in his wife a companion in whom he can infinitely trust. According to Hinduism, marriage is not for the individual, but for the society. The scriptures say that marriage is one of the sixteen initiations given to one on the path of spiritual evolution.

Man is weak and even if he is strong, society is not strong, it is weak. As a result of that even good people fall prey to untimely behaviour. With all this, I feel that chastity and purity are the glories of the individual soul. Thereby not only the society, but also the individual feels complete satisfaction within himself. It is good to marry, it is also good not to marry, but in both cases, spiritual purity, purity of heart, should be maintained by proper mental, psychological, physical and spiritual education.

It is the duty of every man and woman to bear a child. This is how we produce geniuses, thinkers, politicians, leaders, but sadhus have found out another method of producing geniuses by the hundreds, rather than only one by marriage.

What is your opinion about international marriage?

International exchange of blood is nice provided the couple are able to adjust themselves in the social atmosphere. There must be some sort of common ground in the culture and in the thinking, etc., and then international marriage can be successful. We want an international race, not Hindu, not Muslim, not Christian, not Jewish. Inter-marriage is a way to achieve this.

What is the collective karma of Hindus?

Hindus do not have any collective karma. As a whole the social, communal and religious structure of the Hindu religion has been arranged and organized in such an autonomous manner that they have not created any collective karma, but Indians have collective karma, I agree.

Is it also our karma that we are all gathered here from different nations on one international terrace?

To me it appears to be the collective spiritual destiny of mankind which has brought all of you here, not the individual karma alone.

The process of karma seems very complex.

Yes, it is. That is why the law of karma has been discussed from century to century, yet no one has arrived at any final conclusion.



3

Aura and Astrology

28 July 1967

Can correct predictions be made by reading the aura?

It is possible. Such persons have to undergo a special sadhana for many long years. The moment they look at a person they are able to read the aura which surrounds his face. On this basis they make general or particular predictions. However, this is a psychic state which does not help one for long and those who make use of this faculty ultimately fall.

What about astrological predictions?

In India, not only a few, but many priests can make predictions by astrological calculations. The villagers go to them and say one thing, "I have a question", that's all. Then the priest will see the time, star, rashi or zodiac sign, and immediately tell the question. When he is able to tell the question the person must reply, "Yes, this is my question."

Is this telepathy?

It is not telepathy; it is done through astrology.

They say it is done through astrology, but is it actually telepathy?

No. If it was telepathy only a few would be able to do it, but in India practically every village has at least one person and

sometimes even more. They depend entirely on astrological science. They are able to tell the question and then the person who put forth the question has to say, "Yes, go on."

In Hindu astrology, there is an ancient text called *Bhrigu Samhita*, a treatise by the great Rishi Bhrigu. It is a book containing thousands and thousands of horoscopes drawn up by his own hand and predictions are given for each. It is like a key to all the horoscopes of the world. Suppose you go to an astrologer and tell him, "This is my time of birth, this is my name and in this particular star I was born." First he will make your birth chart and then he will look it up in his book, just as we look up a word in the dictionary. When he comes to a particular chart which is identical to yours, he will say, "Yes, here is your chart." Then he will write down those predictions which have already been made in that chart one hundred centuries before and those predictions will come true in your case. He does not foretell anything from his own sources. He only knows how to tally the chart with an ancient chart which already exists in the book.

In India even ministers and prime ministers run after the person who has the *Bhrigu Samhita*. He usually keeps himself undercover; he does not expose himself, but there are many charlatans who claim to have the *Bhrigu Samhita*. It is something like a dictionary of universal horoscope charts through which many predictions are correctly made. The astrologer does not do it date-wise or year-wise. He just copies them from the book. How can it be telepathy?

How does he answer a particular question that is very difficult to find in a book?

In India there are certain methods by which even those questions are answered and it does not involve telepathy. They are very simple matters. For instance, if you have a question the man will say, "Give me any number." Suppose you say 'eleven', or the name of any flower and you say 'rose'. With that he will make predictions. Such people are very common. They know nothing about telepathy, they are dullards.

Do you need to know telepathy in order to be able to use it?

No. These persons have absolutely no psychic attainment. There is a certain method written in the books which have been handed down from guru to disciple or from person to person. They know that if a person says 'rose', tell him this, if he says 'eleven', tell him that. This is all.

If she says 'nine' and I say 'nine', do we get the same reply?

Yes, it will always be the same answer. They only make general predictions. If you say 'rose', it means that you will get employment, but it will take three months and until then you will undergo mental disturbance, something like that. Or your daughter is going to be married very soon, maybe within six months. These are the sort of predictions they make. Some come true and some do not.

Is there an astrologer living near here?

Yes. There are many astrologers about, but they are very simple people in the sense that they do not know English. They only know their mother tongue and Sanskrit. They are very orthodox and observe certain traditions. For example, if you are sitting, he must be to your right or to your left and, when you come, you must pay something. They make very good predictions.

Predictive astrology is very common in India. The day a child is born the first person they call for is not the nurse, but the priest. A doctor or nurse is called only when there are complications, otherwise local midwives, who are experts, handle the case. They have a way of judging the time of birth correctly with sand and water. On the second day the horoscope is cast. It will tell the child was born under this particular sign and at this moment, his father's complexion, his mother's complexion, which side of the uterus he was born, right or left. All that is said only through the horoscope, not by touching the uterus, and they write it clearly on the chart.

Does anyone check it?

The predictions come true; this is the only proof. At the time of birth they cast a general horoscope. They say up to forty years he will be ruled by Saturn, up to eleven years he will be ruled by the sun, up to fifteen years he will be ruled by Venus and Jupiter, at this age there is a possibility of accident, he will get this type of woman in marriage or he should not be married to this type of girl. All these observations are made at the time of the birth of the child and that horoscope is kept very carefully. Then what happens?

When the marriage is about to take place copies of the horoscope are taken and sent through messengers to different people where the boy or girl is. The horoscope is given to the priest who analyzes it and says accordingly, "No. This is not the proper horoscope about which the reference has been given in my client's horoscope. The horoscope of my client, or the girl whom I represent, says that the boy should not be of this star so this is not a suitable match." Then they break off and go on searching.

Whenever there is any trouble with appointments, litigations, illness, misery or financial crisis immediately the horoscope is taken out. It is given to an expert who can read it because reading the horoscope and making the right predictions is very difficult. Then a prediction is made. I have seen with my own eyes many cases where the person is still living years and years later, and everything that was predicted in their horoscope was absolutely correct.

The predictions they make are so clear-cut and precise. They even tell the exact year, month and day, which different crises and things will happen, and this is true in many cases. Even today this science is very much alive in India. An ordinary man who only knows how to read and write can cast a horoscope. Every Hindu must have a horoscope. The moment he has some troubles, he will go to an astrologer and seek his advice. The astrologer will read out the horoscope and he will say, "Yes, this is the trouble with you

and you are going to get out of this, don't worry. I am going to tell you a way out of it."

Must one try to find the way out of it oneself?

Yes. There are some special people, not astrologers, who find a way out. They prescribe some tantric worship. Usually they employ a particular brahmin with a high character, an absolutely spiritual man, and they tell him the trouble. He knows or is given a particular mantra which he repeats with purity and concentration for a certain number of days, nine days, eleven days, twenty-one days. On the final day a *homa* or sacrificial fire is performed. The client is brought there with his wife and they make a *sankalpa*: I am doing this particular thing with this particular motive, and they offer it to the fire and to the brahmin priest.

You have said that your own future has changed from your horoscope. How were you able to change it?

Anybody can change his own destiny when he transcends a certain level of his consciousness. It is the mind of man, the psychic state of man, that can make him change his own future, not all can do it. For those who cannot, the astrological predictions hold true.

How do you know that you are changing it?

When you become spiritual, when you believe in a higher mental condition and when you have actually practised it. Through the practice of yoga you can change your entire destiny.

Do you have to want to change it?

You don't have to will it, it comes automatically.

Otherwise is destiny there?

Even for a spiritual man destiny is there, but to a very great extent many things are written off.

Does it mean that there is destiny on many levels?

Yes. There is destiny on the physical level, astral level and higher levels also.

By knowing your destiny can you not divert it?

You cannot know it without asking someone else. You have to be guided. Usually an individual can go to an expert in the science who will guide him. I personally never wanted such guidance. I thought that, even if I became a victim of my own destiny, I did not want any astrologer to come to my aid. Astrology is a science and it can help some people to attain a certain level, but beyond that one has to find a way out for oneself. The moment you start to cross barrier after barrier, boundary after boundary of your own consciousness, destiny cannot come to trouble you. Although, in some way or another, destiny will keep you bound until you become a jivanmukta.

If you read the aura of a person by looking at him and make some prediction about the future, what kind of scientific statement is that?

While seeing the aura it comes like a paper written for you. Looking at the aura of a person quickly, something flashes before you. It is clearly written like a written page. It comes before you like a landscape and then vanishes. It does not come always. It comes of its own accord. Sometimes it comes often and some times it does not come at all.

If you use that faculty does it disappear?

When you practice it openly it does not appear so often. Suppose I read your aura and tell you something, and then I read his aura and tell him something. In this way the frequencies are diminished. If I read your aura and, without telling you this, I simply say, "Please take care of your health. I don't want you to get sick. Watch your diet. Don't eat too much." In this way I have given you the right type of guidance without saying anything about your aura or

what is written in your destiny. Then you avoid the danger and I don't suffer any loss of power. If I tell you that I feel psychically you are going to get ill and therefore you must be very careful then I lose the power.

If we try to change our destiny is it still bound to come to us again in some form or other?

Not necessarily. If you change your destiny by improving yourself, it will never come to you again, but if you want to change your destiny by some psychic method then it will come back to you in some form again.

Do you practise reading the aura by concentrating on the face of the person?

No. There is no concentration on the face. It is a faculty which comes spontaneously. There are some people who can just understand a person at a glance and there are others who never understand even though they may live with him. It is a faculty which develops when you reach a certain psychic level and thereby you are able to do the reading. It is also possible to be unaware of the science of aura, but still have moments when you are able to see the aura of a person. The difficulty is how to interpret it.

There is a particular angle which the consciousness takes. I don't know if I can explain. It is an angle of your awareness. Somehow or other you take that angle and then you see the aura. If you consciously maintain your awareness always then you will be able to read the aura. I think the aura is the appearance of the life-force and the way of reading it is very important. It does not come in any sort of language. It is not written on a piece of paper. It just comes in a flow of revealed thoughts and then goes away. One has to be quick to catch it and to remember it.

Can you see the aura in darkness?

Yes, you can see the aura much better in darkness, much better.

I have met an astrologer who made the horoscope after only seeing the face of a person.

Yes. Such persons are telepathic.

What about crystal gazing?

Crystal gazing is a science. You can develop it if you are interested. It is a form of *tratak*. In crystal gazing you can see the present, past and future. It comes in the form of a picture. You can see it in a bowl of water also, but crystal is best.

Why is it possible to read the aura of some people and not of others?

You may not be able to read the aura of a person because your consciousness is not ready at that time. There are also some people whose aura cannot be read such as those who are heading towards death. Just before death comes, the aura shrinks. If an accident is going to take place tomorrow, today the aura will shrink. It will go inside the body. When a man is about to do a criminal deed, and soon after that, the aura also shrinks.

Does the aura know there will be an accident?

The aura is a manifestation of your own personality. It shrinks because the inner man in you knows that the accident is due. There is someone in you who knows that the accident will take place and, out of fear, the aura shrinks. The inner man knows more than the outer man. There is still another man who knows more than the middle man and there is the innermost personality who knows everything. This is what you call *hiranyagarbha*, the subtle body, the astral body. The astral body expands ten fingers outside of the physical body. It can expand and it can also shrink. It shrinks automatically.

There are also many other things that are noted by the inner personality, not only the aura, but also the smell. Every man has a different smell. Personally, I am more interested in the smell than in the aura.

Can you come to know everything about the nature of a person by his smell?

Yes, but I am not interested in doing this. Why should I? My job is not to know the nature of a person. My job is to teach asana, pranayama and dhyana. Why should I know what is in the mind of another? I do not want to know what is in your pocket. I do not want to know what is in your stomach. I do not want to know what is in your bag. That is not my business.

If that becomes my business I can do that too, but presently my job is just to wake you up in the morning at three o'clock and teach you yoga. That is my duty. I know only that much and I do not want to know anything more. I believe that if the contents of your mind are not satisfactory, even if your personality is what we call negative, it is better that I do not know about it.

After many years I have come to the conclusion that, whosoever you may be, if you learn the correct practices your smell will change, your aura will change. So what is the use of seeing this student's aura and that student's aura? It is meaningless because the aura will change when you learn asana, pranayama, dhyana, Sanskrit, *Gita*, music and yogic living. I only smell twice, at the beginning and at the end of the course. In between there is no use. It is only wasting time and psychic powers.

Our purpose is very clear – to realize who you are, what you are. Beyond the body, beyond the mind, beyond the psyche, beyond the senses, is the spiritual man, the atman. That you must realize. That atman is in you. If I manage to get you up at three o'clock to practice asana, pranayama and dhyana, in spite of all the difficulties and discomforts, in nine months the aura will change, perhaps a new aura will develop altogether.

That is my personal philosophy by which my actions are guided. I do not like to know anything about your personal affairs. Suppose Geeta comes to me and says, "Madhava tells lies." I do not want to know that. Of course, I give her

a patient hearing and if I receive a thought from Madhava, good or bad, I do not want to know it.

If our subconscious mind wants some help from you will you give it?

Why should I? What kind of help do you want? We can only help you through yoga, not in any other way. Why should you seek help from another? The real power is within you; that you must realize. Yes, it is true. You want to borrow money from me, but the atman is in you. Within you is the fountain of joy, within you is the ocean of bliss. It is cashable money; you can always cash it. You must know that you have the treasure within you, that is all. Why do spiritual aspirants seek help?

Swamiji, if we think like this, isn't it possible to develop a superiority complex?

If you do not have a superiority complex then you have an inferiority complex. One of the complexes has to be developed, but it is better to be above them both. That is a very great stage in life – a man of steady wisdom, a man beyond the three gunas, a man beyond all pains and pleasures. We are talking about a spiritual state, but in ordinary life either you have an inferiority complex or a superiority complex.

Is it true that many people who start yoga develop a superiority complex because they have a different outlook on life than those who do not practise yoga?

Yes, they think they know better and they do not care very much for what others have to say. Surely a yogic aspirant has to be like that – having his independent way of thinking, his independent sense of judgement.

Do you think that a superiority complex leads to success?

Yes, that is a better complex. You have to be sure about yourself.

We have many books about yoga in the West, but very few that explain about the tattwas. Would you give us some explanation?

What tattwas do you mean? Tattwas of the body, of the mind, of the psyche? *Tattwa* means element, the elements of creation. In Samkhya philosophy, which means Shaivism, a correct and elaborate enumeration of the tattwas is given. There are twenty-four tattwas in an individual human being: five karmendriyas, five jnanendriyas, five pranas, four antahkarana and five natural elements, making twenty-four plus one, the soul, equalling twenty-five.

The five primal elements are ether, air, fire, water and earth. Beyond that, there are three elements of nature: sattwa, rajas and tamas. From these three, the five primal elements are born. Through a process of permutation and combination of these elements the whole cosmos, in the form of this physical structure, has come into existence. This is what they say, but in which particular context do you want me to explain the elements?

I thought there was a special science of elements which states that you should not undertake certain actions when a particular tattwa is prevailing?

If you are talking about the tattwas belonging to prana then it is swara yoga. When a particular tattwa is flowing you should not undertake certain types of work and, when a particular tattwa is prevailing, the colour of that element is seen in the aura. That is the reading of the aura of your pranic force. If you have the red aura flowing in your pranic force you can superimpose it on the breath. The breath flows have colour and by concentration you can see the colour. Every day it changes from hour to hour. For three days, at a particular hour, the breath may have the same colour and on the fourth day it changes. Then, on the sixth or seventh day, again it has the same colour. You see, this is the astral colour, the colour of the astral being.

There are five tattwas which have five corresponding colours, but these five colours are seen in the order of permutation and combination. They become so many colours. Unless one completely devotes oneself to swara yoga it will be impossible to know the tattwa flowing with the prana at a particular moment. They say that the breath is a gross manifestation of prana and prana is a gross manifestation of mind. A particular thought in the mind manifests in the form of prana. Thoughts have different colours, for example, mean or bad thoughts are black. When the thought is manifested in the form of prana it has the same colour and again, when it is manifested in the form of breath, the colour will be the same.

Now the psyche starts having bad thoughts, black colour; or passionate thoughts, red colour; or any thoughts, any colour, then the same colour comes through the prana to the breath. This is how the whole thing is known. When you are thinking a particular thought, the colour of your prana becomes the same colour, and the breath, which is the gross manifestation of prana, will also have the same colour.

The scripture, *Swara Yoga*, is a dialogue between Lord Shiva and Parvati. It is in Sanskrit. You must be able to read Sanskrit. I want you to give more time to Sanskrit.

How can we understand Sanskrit?

It will be easy. In about nine months you will be able to understand elementary Sanskrit. I tell you, Sanskrit is the easiest language of all. It is much easier than English; that I know.

4

Death and the Nature of God

29 July 1967

Why do the hours of sleep before midnight give one beauty?

It is said that the hours of sleep before twelve give beauty for the simple reason that when the sun sets there is depression in the nervous system as more carbon and less oxygen are found in the general atmosphere. Whenever there is more carbon in the system and you try to keep awake and active you are going against nature, and that brings tensions. When there is tension the entire face is distorted, there is heaviness in the forehead and all the muscles are tight.

The moment carbon is deposited in the system tension accumulates. Then, if you go to bed, it helps you keep the muscles relaxed. Due to the absence of the sun, trees and plants start pouring carbon into the atmosphere, reaching its maximum between 12 and 2 am. From 2 am, less carbon is discharged as more oxygen starts coming in from the sun ray's rising in the east. Invisible sunrays counteract the carbon.

In India dead bodies are burned rather than buried. Does this affect the journey of the soul after death?

In Hinduism, cremation is the general rule, however, little babies and sannyasins are buried, not burned. This is because they are considered to be pure. The purpose of burying the body is to withhold the soul for some more time.

Bodies are burned naked. Before the body is burned we make sure the person is completely dead, not only physically, but the subtle prana has also left the body.

Here in India, the time of death is usually known beforehand because the people cast predictions. Those who die in old age are generally able to predict their death a week or so in advance so that they can tell their family members to call all the relatives. Then they stop all worldly activities and start reading the *Gita* and the scriptures. When the exact time comes they close their eyes and die. This kind of death is very common in India, but even without any foreknowledge, the death is thoroughly ascertained before cremation by many means which are available in India aside from a medical certificate.

Hindus believe that in different types of deaths the soul remains in the body, whereas the prana departs because of the cessation of the heartbeat. In the case of a person who dies from a snake bite the decision is very difficult. Whenever a snake bite has taken place and one dies, they do not burn the body immediately. They wait and assert fully that the soul has departed from the body. Sometimes they take up to twenty-four hours after the death to decide. In the case of a snake bite, they often call experts on mantra shastra and many people are brought back to life. That is why Swami Vivekananda used to say in America that it is not a very great thing to bring back a dead man, even ordinary people do it in our country.

When a Hindu dies, the first thing they do is put the body on the ground and remove all the clothes, placing a cloth over it. Then they inform the relatives, priest and astrologers. You have to call all the relatives and you cannot take out the dead body until the eldest son comes. If the son is not there or cannot come, the brother's son must be there. In India it is a religious duty to attend the funeral ceremony, even if you have some misunderstanding with that family. In this system you cannot poison anybody and just dispose of the body. If you do not call the priest and relations, people

will say that you must have done something wrong to the dead man and out of fear you did not call them.

This is a tradition to keep society functioning, and at the same time, the dead body remains intact for a long period so that the death is certain. Meanwhile, many religious ceremonies are performed like chanting of mantras and the *Gita*, bringing Ganga water, sandalwood, etc. These ceremonies are a kind of psychological diversion for the people who are all feeling sad. At the same time, they have subtle effects on the spirit. So, these ceremonies are added for psychological reasons and many are added for eschatological reasons (pertaining to the other world of the soul).

For a sannyasin, all the funeral ceremonies are done at the time of initiation, because when you take sannyasa you are supposed to die and get reborn immediately in the same body. In a sannyasin's case, if the dead body is burnt, then the soul will also be reborn immediately. Therefore, they do not burn his body, because they want his soul to remain after his death and not be reborn immediately. If the souls of ordinary people are withheld they create many troubles, while the sannyasin's soul will always be a guiding influence.

At the time of cremation, Hindus are very careful that the etheric body is not left inside the physical body. If the etheric body remains inside, it will undergo great pain. Therefore, when the body is cast on the fire and is burning, the son goes up to it with a log of wood and breaks the skull, so that if any part of the etheric body still remains inside it will have to leave. All these precautions are taken for the purpose of avoiding giving pain to the etheric body.

The body should not remain in an ordinary position after death because the soul will return to the body even in the grave. The etheric body or pranic body is connected with the physical body by a silver cord. We also believe that, when the soul leaves the body, a connection between the etheric and physical navel remains there as long as the dead body remains. That is why they say that the dead body must be burnt in order to sever the connection.

As long as this connection remains, the soul cannot go to another plane. This connection has to be cut otherwise the soul keeps hovering around restlessly. It comes in dreams or tells people in other manners if it can. These poor souls keep on hovering and hovering, very painfully, unless and until the opportunity comes for rebirth. They cannot exhaust their karma because it cannot be exhausted without the help of a body. At the time of the cosmic deluge, there is a particular day when all the unrebored souls are dispensed finally by a certain law. These are released from the bondage of the etheric body, but again they have to take birth.

After death, three bodies are left behind on the earth: *annamaya kosha*, food body; *pranamaya kosha*, etheric body; and *manomaya kosha*, mental body. Only two bodies are carried further: the *vijñanamaya kosha*, psychic body, and *anandamaya kosha*, bliss body. These two bodies, guided by their karma or desires, leave this physical body and go to another body or planet. Without the physical body, the soul cannot understand anything. Its movements are unconscious and they are guided by the karma. The soul is carried like a baby is carried by the mother. The soul is innocent and ignorant, like a baby, and the karmas are like the mother.

This stage is unlike the stage desired in deep meditation when one is on the psychic plane and looks back to this physical consciousness as if it were a dream. If we judge these things from our point of view, they will appear different, but if we were to judge death, darkness and pain from a cosmic point of view, then they would not exist at all. From the individual point of view, we say death is pain, whereas pain is not the destiny of everything which exists. Pain is a condition of mind. In order to understand this question better we have to understand the nature of God.

What is the nature of God?

There are many definitions of God. What is God? Is he a person? Is he cosmic consciousness? Has he got a limited body or is he unlimited? Is he beyond all creation which

we see and do not see? Is God a substance, an existence, a state of being? What is God? It is such a vast subject that sometimes it is difficult to say. It is beyond thinking.

So far, we have been thinking about God in a very limited way and through a very limited mind. Our concept of God is according to our own limitations. The smaller the mind is, the smaller the conception of God, and those who do not have any mind at all, have no conception of God. Likewise, there are many people who think that God exists, not as something, but as everything.

Everything that is existing in the universe – that is God. When we take into consideration that God is the sum total of all existence, then the question of pain, bliss and non-bliss does not arise. Because everything is within me: flesh, blood, bone, marrow, heart, lungs, intestines, life, and I am a sum total of that. Likewise, God is the sum total of all that exists everywhere.

Everything is a part of God. Birth, death, happiness, misery, success, failure, love, hate, everything is in God, not outside. God has not created it, it is in God and we are in God, we are not separate from Him. God is not a man. God is not a different thing from myself. God is not a creator, but the sum total of all that is and shall be. That is the vedantic concept and perhaps it is the ultimate concept.

I believe that, according to the philosophy of Vedanta, the process of creation is beginningless and endless. This creation shall never come to an end. It is an eternal mystery.

There is no last day and first day, so God is not a creator. Then what is God? Is He the sustainer of the entire movement? What do you mean by it? Myself, Swami Satyananda, am I the sustainer of this body? Who am I? I am the body, I am everything in the body. In the same manner, creation itself is the body of God. The whole cosmos, the galaxies, the sun, the moon, the space, the air, everything you find, including myself, is the cosmic body of God. You may call it Brahman, the truth, the ultimate. You may say God has no form, you may say He has, because everything we see is God. When you come to realize it, you will find that

all that has been said about God was conceived by a limited mind, a limited intellect.

Is it not true that a person who has spiritual ambitions wants to rush to the spiritual heights and usually hates everything to do with worldly life?

Yes. Spiritual seekers have to be properly guided, because the moment you go into spiritual life, you despise worldly things. Right or wrong, it is the natural destiny.

Please tell us about rishis.

Rishis are those who have seen their inner self in the depths of meditation, those who have known the secret of creation, those who have become aware of the invisible things happening around them, point one. Point two, rishis are those who have gone beyond the senses, beyond the sense objects. Those who have control over the mind and senses, those who have a proper check over their sleep, food, fears, sexual urge, are the rishis.

According to scriptural evidence a higher race existed upon the earth thousands of years ago. One million years ago, when the first man was born, we find reference to a different way of life. During the period of Sri Rama, for example, Rishi Vishwamitra, Rishi Agastya, Rishi Vashishtha and many other great rishis lived, but never after that.

Was Rama from Europe?

No. Rama was born in Ayodhya on the banks of the river Saryu. One of his stepmothers was from Caucasia, another stepmother was from Southeast Asia, and his own mother was from Bihar. In India, we usually have six to seven stepmothers because we belong to an agricultural community. The name of Rama's great ancestor was Raghu. His race belonged to the solar race. The whole world is divided into two compartments: the solar race which is fair and brown in complexion, and the lunar race, which is dark in complexion. It is a technical subject. We will have to discuss it from a specific point of view.

5

Education and Anarchy

30 July 1967

What improvements should be made in the education and upbringing of children?

As human beings we are supposed to discharge some duty which is beneficial for ourselves and for the society in which we live. If the child is too young to realize his duty, then there must be someone older to remind him, either quietly and sweetly or else through fear. Fear can be used as long as the child feels that the elder person loves him. For example, a young boy misbehaves, so the father tells him, "You have to behave properly or I am not going to have anything to do with you." Certainly the father reprimands his son out of love, not because he hates him. This must be understood.

Sometimes fear is necessary for the development of the personality and realization of one's aim. If fear is absent, hysteria becomes rampant. Hysteria is an abnormal psychic state. Hysterical thinking, hysterical behaviour is a deep psychological problem. In order to bring the child out of that state, fear is sometimes essential. However, a fear complex can also have a negative influence on children. If they think that someone hates them and wants to put them down, then fear is generated and this distorts the personality, therefore we must have love and tolerance for the child and not generate fear in him unnecessarily.

The relations between parents and children are deteriorating day by day. Moreover, the parents have developed abnormal patterns of thinking and behaviour and the children inherit their *samskaras*. Now the husband and wife love their child so much that he becomes the centre of their attachment. As a result of that, proper training at home is lacking. The child, being in constant association with the parents, is unable to wash off these parental *samskaras* and influences.

The father and mother can never train a child without the help of relatives such as the grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, etc. The child learns how to behave in the company of all these. He develops a more mature sense of behaviour which is totally absent in children today. More than the parents, it is the grandparents who play an important role in developing a mature psychology in children. Seriousness comes when children live with the grandparents. If they do not have this opportunity the entire behaviour of the youngsters is changed. When they grow older they will have problems at home, problems with the teacher at school and there will be absolute anarchy.

Although the modern educational system is developing better and more comprehensive teaching methods, still the student-teacher relationship is steadily declining. A code of ethics should be established for the teachers and after that a code of ethics for the students will come by itself. First of all, the teachers must act with idealism, then the children will respond to them more positively, because I have found that children are always idealistic. The child's mind hates artificial mannerisms, pomp and show. If he knows that you are telling a lie, he will never agree.

When children grow up in an idealistic atmosphere in the company of parents, friends and elders, then they are influenced very positively. In India there is a wonderful system of education known as *gurukul*. *Guru* means 'teacher' and *kul* means 'family'. The guru lived somewhere away from cities and towns, in a village or in the jungle, with his wife and family. They kept a little land on which they lived, having no connection with the outside world. The students

used to come and stay in the guru's family for a period of ten or twelve years, learning literature, arts, archery, etc. There were different gurus for different arts.

Even today in India there are many good gurukuls where the students are kept just like the guru's own children. Early in the morning they are woken up in the family atmosphere, then they do prayer, play, study and join in many other duties and activities. They remain with the guru for many years, leading a simple, pure and holy life. They do not return to their home until their study is over. The life of the teacher and students in the gurukul is absolutely exemplary and idealistic. Boys coming out of the gurukul are very disciplined, well-behaved and intelligent children.

The problem of education, as I see it, begins in the home. Whereas children want parents to be idealistic, parents want children to be obedient, efficient and intelligent. They do not want them to be idealistic. As a result, the children are unable to formulate their own philosophy or hypothesis of life and, therefore, it is very difficult for them to express themselves or develop according to their own nature. If our student community has lost its direction, the blame should go to the parents. They are unable to guide the child properly and structure the patterns of thinking which the child has to develop. In the West, even religious education has failed to influence the life of youngsters. The malady is incurable. Something must come, perhaps a war or a revolution, to set things right.

What can be done to prevent anarchy?

Arnold Toynbee, the great historian, once remarked, "In a civilization where the emotional side of man is left undeveloped and unchecked, many mistakes will be made at national and political levels because, after all, the leaders of the country are no different from people like you and me. Where there is emotional stress, emotional breakdown and absolute lack of self-control, the whole race moves along the wrong path, war takes place and the civilization is completely destroyed, this has happened a number of times in history."

In order to prevent national and racial disaster, the emotional side of man, of the race, of the nation, should be properly channelled. In order to channel the emotional personality of man, bhakti yoga is the best path because it consumes the unused surplus emotions in man which otherwise become anarchical. Another way is service to the nation and to the poor. This is also a good way of sublimating the emotions. After all, when we serve others, we only help ourselves. Service of the poor is nothing but the adjustment of unused and anarchical complexes, and that is why in spiritual life it is said that you must serve the poor.

In service there must be love, but bhakti is not loving man, it is loving God in every man. When you serve a poor man, this type of bhakti is more or less useful for the society. It may not bring in cash revenue, it may not increase industrial output, but in the long run this type of bhakti will help the society to survive through the political accidents because the abnormal, emotional complexes of the society are being properly guided, coded and controlled by bhakti as a whole. When this type of control is brought into society, the people will try to think a number of times before they take particular steps, and that is how society survives the accidents of history. Toynbee spoke beautifully on this point, "There are cultures which have always based their traditions, society, economics and politics on faith in God, and those cultures have survived the ravages of time."

If you loved your fellow men as you ought to, there would be no problems, but how to love them? First of all you must develop bhakti, love for God. After having checked all your emotional complexes, you can slowly start serving the poor. That should be the second step. However, you must realize that actually you are serving yourself and not them. Also you have to use your judgement in deciding when to help and when not. There are many forms of service. Service is not only giving material aid. Even in a wealthy society, people need mutual help. Sympathy can also be a form of service. I think that service can be done at all levels through all kinds of people.

6

The Practice of Trataka

Class lecture, 31 July 1967

The practice of trataka has been known throughout the ages by people of all cultures. The hypnotists, mesmerists and magicians have all practised it. The term *trataka* means 'intent gazing'. Trataka is not simply gazing, but gazing at one object or point intensely. Trataka is a part of hatha yoga and also a part of raja yoga. When you practise until the tears roll down, then it is a part of hatha yoga, but when you practise in another way which I am going to explain, then it is a part of raja yoga.

Purpose of the practice

Trataka is a very important kriya which must be taken up with great care and with absolute sanctity. It must not be done carelessly or insincerely. Before taking up the practice, you should be very clear about your purpose. There are many methods of trataka and you must choose the correct one. If you want to practise trataka for the purpose of telepathic communication, there is one method. If you want to practise in order to influence the minds of others, there is another method. If you wish to practise in order to improve your eyesight, then the method will differ again.

So, in order to obtain different results, different methods of trataka are followed. In India, for example, there is a

particular practice called *chhaya upasana*, the art of shadow gazing. It is concerned with obtaining knowledge of the exact time of death and also an imminent danger can be known far in advance. Trataka is an important component of that practice. In one of the ancient rituals of Persia I found that a particular person could be summoned by using a method of trataka. The psychic language which is spoken by the eyes compels the other person to come. There is no option to it.

Trataka is a practice which should only be used by yoga minded aspirants, not by all. However, many people in India as well as abroad have long been misappropriating this science to serve selfish as well as evil ends. For this reason, centuries ago, the Christian church forbade such practices as they were considered to be the basis for black magic and all those who used them were excommunicated. I have explained this point so that you understand that this sacred science should never be misused. One should practise it only with a spiritual purpose in mind. Healing can be done through trataka, but it is also not considered to be a higher aim.

Trataka is a method by which you can enter into meditation very easily, if the mind is turbulent and you are unable to check your thoughts voluntarily, the practice of trataka will enable you to succeed in meditation. Before you start meditating, you should practise a little trataka and then sit down quietly. In this way meditation becomes spontaneous. This is the real purpose of trataka.

Stages of the practice

The practice of trataka can be divided into four stages:

External gazing in which the eyes remain open and focused on such objects as the flame of a candle, a black dot on a white background, the rising sun, etc.

Internal gazing where you close your eyes and try to see a star, a point of light, a black dot, a yellow dot or a red dot. This is the practice of steadying the inner vision. In Sanskrit it is called drishti sadhana; *drishti* means 'inner vision' and

sadhana means 'to make steady'. Here, the inner eye is to be made steady and for this you must have an inner point. Unless you have developed an internal point, you cannot do it. That internal, psychic point can be a brilliant star, but you must see it, not just imagine it.

Gazing into the void is known as *shoonya drishti*; *shoonya* means 'the void' or 'formless state', not *chidakash*. In *shoonya drishti* there is no object of awareness. This form of *trataka* is to be done with the eyes open. You gaze at nothingness. It takes a long time to get into this state, maybe ten minutes, half an hour or one hour. With your eyes open you are unable to see anything, because the mind has become introverted. It is not so difficult to achieve; it comes quite naturally. After some time the eyes become dim; they are half open and you see nothing.

Continuous gazing is looking at any point without blinking the eyes for hours together. It is something like what Ramana Maharshi used to practise, sitting for ten, eleven, twelve hours a day without blinking his eyes.

Trataka on external objects

Any object which is steady in nature and does not flicker is suitable for *trataka*. However, it should not be dazzlingly bright nor have destructive rays. External *trataka* can be practised on the flame of a candle or on a black dot. If the dot is placed at a distance, then it should be larger and if it is closer, then it should be smaller. It varies from practice to practice. You can also practise *trataka* on a crystal, on the rising sun, on any idol having dimensions, a *murti*, or a symbol like a cross, a swastika, a crescent moon, the lotus of the heart, etc. However, you must choose one object and stick to it. Before choosing you must find out whether that particular object will be suitable for you. For example, in some cases, the practice of *trataka* on the rising sun is very beneficial and in others it can be harmful. This means that the practice must be done in a completely different way by different kinds of people.

Trataka on a candle flame

During trataka the candle flame must not flicker, therefore you must practise in a room which is absolutely calm and quiet, where no breeze is blowing. The candle should be placed on a firm stand about an arm's length away from you. When the flame becomes steady, you should gaze into it. Do not look into the whole flame, but focus on the central part just above the wick. Continue to gaze for as long as possible without winking or blinking and without any strain. When the eyes begin to feel tired, you should close them. Tears should not roll down. Do not strain at all.

The moment you close your eyes, you must gaze at the internal point. Here, you have a combination of trataka on an external object and on an internal psychic point. Close your eyes and see somewhere in the chidakasha a tiny luminous, coloured dot. Gaze steadily at the dot. It is similar to a small grain of wheat, rice or barley in shape, but the colour changes from moment to moment. It depends on how long you have been gazing at the candle flame. After about five minutes, the colour of the dot will be bright red, but after only one minute, the colour will be black, white or dull brown.

From moment to moment the dot becomes dimmer and suddenly it disappears. All this happens within a few seconds, but one should be careful not to open the eyes. You should make special note of this point. Even if the psychic point disappears, keep your eyes closed. Again, try to assemble the psychic consciousness and recollect that psychic point. In a few seconds the same things will reappear and when it reappears it will have a different colour altogether.

You must continue gazing at it with the help of your inner perception, your inner vision, your inner eyes. It will grow dim, fainter, fainter and still fainter, and then it will disappear. Still do not open your eyes, but assemble your consciousness again, recollect that particular point and see it come once more before your vision. Thus this psychic point appears, disappears, reappears, disappears, again reappears,

becomes dim, disappears, reappears, and again goes dimmer and dimmer. Ultimately it becomes absolutely black and merges with the psychic background.

As a beginner this round will hardly take five minutes, but after some practice one single round will take half an hour: three minutes gazing at the candle flame and twenty-seven minutes visualizing the psychic point within, appearing, disappearing, reappearing and disappearing.

Those who practice this will find another phenomenon. That is, the moment you close your eyes, the psychic dot appearing in chidakasha will move upward. Many aspirants find this absolutely disturbing because, after a certain time, they do not know where to look. They cannot look up any further and the dot goes up and up. Those who have practised shambhavi mudra are able to steady that psychic point in bindu chakra. The point moves upward and tries to become one with this chakra.

Then what to do? I personally feel that when beginners practise with the candle flame for some time and then close their eyes, seeing the psychic dot moving upwards, they must follow it. When they cannot follow it any more, they should lower their vision and discover the point again. When they have discovered it, again it moves upwards, again it will disappear and again they have to discover the point, until it merges into the dark background. When they are unable to discover the point anymore, in spite of their best efforts, then they should open their eyes and do another round of external trataka.

While gazing at the candle flame, so far as the spiritual practice is concerned, for the sake of concentration and manifestation of the inner vision, one should close ones eyes much before the strain takes place and the tears roll down. A practitioner must be able to judge for himself how long to practise so that, when he closes his eyes, the tears will not roll down and the eyes will not burn. I have personally experienced that while gazing at the flame my eyes were all right, but the moment I closed my eyes tears started rolling

down. So, it is up to the individual to decide. If you are able to gaze for three minutes then practise only for two. However, it depends on many factors.

The practice of *trataka* on a candle is simply impossible under a fan because the flame will flicker. If you find a fan is necessary then you must practise on a black dot. Under a fan or in the wind you will experience a drying effect and tears will come.

You should do eleven rounds of practice. It is said that eleven rounds of *trataka* make one *dharana*, which means that the mental conception becomes clear. When you think about a cow and you see a cow in your mind it is called *dharana*. When you are only thinking about it and not seeing it, then it is called *kalpana*, a lower state of imagination. *Dharana* is a higher state of *kalpana* – imagination with a clear-cut conception.

It is sure that after practising eleven rounds of *trataka* on the candle flame in front of you, you are going to see every detail of the candle mentally – the colour, the wick, the light. You see that the wax is melting and dripping down. That should be the intensity of your psychic conception. When this state has arrived, meditation begins. Unless the object actually becomes clear within the field of your inner vision, there is very little hope of getting into meditation and much less hope of *samadhi*.

Trataka on a black dot

The size of the dot used for this practise differs for each individual. If you are unable to see the dot then you should have a bigger dot and if you cannot focus the eyes on a big dot, then you should have a smaller dot. The important thing is not to strain the eyes. You must decide the size of the dot yourself, according to your eyesight. The distance of the dot should be one and a half to two feet, and if you see two dots it means the distance is wrong. It is either too close or too far. However, the distance is fixed and it should always remain the same, between one and a half and two feet.

So, what are you to do? Change the size of the dot; use either a larger or a smaller dot. The same can be said about photographs of pictures of Christ, Shiva, your guru, the symbol *Om*, or anything that is printed. This is to avoid affecting the retina during the three or four minutes of gazing. When you gaze at an object which is too close, the object appears to be double. At this time detachment of the retina takes place. Once the retina gets accustomed to detachment, it will become a major eye defect. If you gaze at an object for ten, fifteen or twenty minutes you will only cause strain to your eyes, but that is not very dangerous. The most dangerous thing is if you see two objects; it means your retina is becoming detached and this is a major optical defect. Experts will find it difficult to correct.

A dot of the proper size should be placed at the proper distance. After gazing for several minutes you should close your eyes and look within. You will find a shadow with the same outline. If it is a human figure, you will see a human shadow. If it is a cross, then a cross-like shadow. If it is the symbol *Om*, then an *Om*-like shadow. If it is a crescent moon, then a crescent moon-like shadow. This shadow should remain constant in the same manner as taught in *trataka* on the candle flame. The effect on the retina now is different because here you do not see a luminous object.

In this practice there is also a combination of *trataka* on an external object and *trataka* on an internal psychic point. When you gaze at the shadow of *Om*, it may be black, blue, grey, or any colour. It will disappear, reappear, disappear, etc. When you no longer see it, then you have to start again. Eleven such rounds make one *dharana*.

Trataka on an object with dimension

Trataka can also be practised on an object which has dimensions such as an image, an idol or a living man. An idol may have grey colour, but the living man may have a brown colour. Whenever you practise *trataka* on a living person, an idol or an object which has dimensions, the

important thing is not only to gaze at the object as you did the candle, but you have to become particularly aware of the three dimensions. Here, it is not only the awareness of the object, but also the awareness of the presence of dimensions.

When you do *trataka* on a picture of a clock, you just have to see the face: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, then close your eyes and see something like a shadow. However, when you are practising *trataka* on an actual clock, you do not have to see merely the face and the numbers, you will also have to be aware of the dimensions. This is how you are able to train your psyche to visualize any object with all dimensions.

You know that objects outside have dimensions. There are people who do not see the dimensions in their dreams, but there are also people who see dreams and visions as clearly as the external reality. That is because their psyche is especially developed. Similarly, there are two types of *dharanas*: *dharana* on an object without dimensions and *dharana* on an object with dimensions.

With this second type of *dharana*, *dhyana* begins because there is no difference between *dhyana* and actual life. If I see you in *dhyana*, you are as real to me as you are in actual life. It will be impossible for me to think that you are not there, because of the particular awareness of the dimensions – the dimensions are so vivid.

We did not speak about dimensions when we discussed *trataka* on photographs, nor did we talk about it with crystal gazing, but in these practices also, when you close your eyes and the psychic counterpart appears in your consciousness, you should become especially aware of the dimensions of the object. If it has no dimensions, you must create them. They say that when you practise eleven rounds of *trataka* on an object with dimensions, it makes one *dhyana*. When *dharana* becomes steady in the case of *trataka* on a candle flame, it can become *dhyana* also. Then the candle flame will appear with dimensions.

Length of practise

When you practise trataka on external objects you must be careful that you are not overdoing it. Tears should not roll down; there should be no strain on the eyes at any cost. Increase the period gradually, from half a minute to three minutes. This is a good period, but those who think that they have to gaze at the object for ten minutes, well, I am sure that after some time they will be practising trataka without seeing anything. This is the third stage: trataka on shoonya. You are not going from trataka on external objects to trataka on internal psychic points, but you are in trataka on shoonya. When you practise trataka for more than three minutes, your eyes become blank.

Crystal gazing is done in dim light, gazing at a dot in bright light and gazing at a candle flame with no light. My opinion on trataka on the rising sun, is that those who do this practice without proper guidance may develop cataracts at a later stage.

Trataka on the psychic eye

There is one more important object used for trataka and that is the psychic eye. For the purpose of spiritual meditation, the systems of trataka which have just been enumerated will do, but for a psychic purpose, one can do trataka on the psychic eye or a psychic point, under instructions.

When I was a boy, I used to correspond with a great magician, juggler and hypnotist. He sent me lessons on trataka on the psychic eye. I practised it for some time and it was very effective. Within three months, whatever I used to tell friends to do, they would immediately obey me.

In this practice, the best psychic eye is a photograph of your own right eye, only one eye; it is never done on two eyes. There is another way. Muslim saints put a point between the eyebrows, sit in front of a mirror and do trataka on that point, but this practice is strictly for those who are sannyasins and saints, not for those whose minds are unstable. They should not even do trataka on their own

body in a mirror. This is a very powerful practice and it is said in one of the sutras of Patanjali. “He who concentrates on his own body is capable of losing his physical existence for the time being and maybe others might not find him there.”

When we were children, we wanted to experiment on mirror gazing. We did it, but it created so much fear in our minds that up to this day we do not want to look into the mirror. As a result of that practice, I have developed a sort of indifference towards mirrors. I do not want to look at my own face in the mirror. Those people who are highly psychic and do not belong to the category of saints, but live in this world with daily knocks and blows, should not practise this. The visions, the experiences which result from this practice are absolutely unbelievable. You should never say, “I am not psychic”, because you don’t know.

Continuation of trataka

The object of trataka should not be changed during your personal practice. You should do your best to continue it, but if it is a luminous object such as the light of a candle or deepak, then you should only practise it for a few months. You will not be able to continue trataka on any luminous object for a very long time, because any light, even a mild light, makes a permanent impression on the retina. As a result of that the retina is deadened and one may develop cataracts at a later stage. So, the practice of trataka on a candle flame, the rising sun or the reflection of the sun in water, should not be continued for very long.

How long should we continue the practice? No clear instruction has been given anywhere in the books. My personal view is that when the psychic point emerges, one should give up the practice. The psychic point can emerge at any time, even when you are not thinking about it. Let me make it more clear. If you have been practising trataka on a candle flame for a month or so, and you find that whenever you close your eyes, not necessarily after trataka,

but anytime, day or night, the psychic point just comes by itself, then you should discontinue the practice.

When the psychic point appears by itself, it means that the external trataka has made an impression through your retina on your subconscious mind. This is a physical effect and it has to be washed away. Any physical effect such as light on the retina has to be washed off. Therefore, it is my personal view that the practice of trataka should not be prolonged. Some people try to look at light for ten to twenty minutes, thinking that they may gain some better result, but they should not do it.

If you are able to develop the psychic point after one minute of trataka, so much the better. If you are able to develop the psychic point without even looking at the candle flame at all, it is very good, but remember that the psychic point is not to emerge of its own accord, it should only come when you think about it. The coming of this psychic point should be associated with your willpower. When the psychic point emerges by itself, it is time to discontinue the practice.

Healing the eyes

Spectacles should not be worn during the practice of trataka, but there is nothing said about this subject in the ancient books. One whose eyes are not good should practise trataka on a castor oil flame until tears come. Then close the eyes and wait for them to dry. In the beginning, practise one round and gradually increase up to five.

The practice of neti is also beneficial for the eyes. It should be done with luke warm, saline water. Washing the eyes with rose water is good for the eyes. Instead of rose water, several drops of lotus honey or sahan honey can be used, as these two kinds of honey contain very mild acid. This practice should be done in the early morning and at night.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

While practising trataka on a candle flame, it is difficult to hold the after-image of the flame steadily. Why is this and how can it be corrected?

While gazing into the candle flame, a small dot can be seen there. Sometimes it is red in colour, sometimes yellow, green or white. It has different outlines; it may be oblong or egg shaped. While practising trataka, you have to gaze at the top of the wick, at the point which is ignited. That is the central point of concentration during trataka. When you close your eyes and gaze at the after-image, what you see inside is the effect of the light on your retina; it is nothing but that. The more brilliant the light is, the deeper the effect will be.

The after-image always comes, even if your eyes flicker, but somehow or other, if you are unable to steady the movement of the brain, then the image goes away. The brain is always in vibration and it has to be controlled for the time being. Again you try to steady it. The image comes and it goes; you cannot hold it for long. There is nothing wrong with gazing at the candle light for one to three minutes, but time is not the important factor, only steadiness. You must be able to stop the vibrations of the nerves, retina and brain. Sometimes you are unable to have voluntary control over the retina so you cannot see the light inside.

Can we cover our eyes with our palms while looking in?

Yes, perhaps a certain amount of pressure on the retina makes the image steadier. You can also cover the eyes with the hollow part of the palm without giving pressure to the eyes.

Can we do trataka on a clay lamp?

No. A clay lamp should not be used for trataka for an extended period.

What is the purpose of antar trataka?

It is practised for concentration. Here you practise internal shambhavi. When you are able to perform shambhavi correctly, then you will be able to steady your brain and mind for some time.

Is external shambhavi good for concentration?

Yes, but it is very strenuous.

What are the other uses of shambhavi?

Firstly, concentration becomes much easier and the vibrations of the brain can be controlled at will. Some yogis can even control the rate of the heartbeat like that. You can control the vibratory movements of the brain for some time. After that a state of unconsciousness can be brought about.

Does one bring back experiences of the unconscious to the conscious level?

When individual consciousness is in tune with the unconscious, at that time different sounds and figures floats before you. When there is expansion of individual consciousness towards the superconscious state, at that time different sounds are heard and different figures are seen. Those who are pure in mind, who have completely devoted themselves to higher life, who do not have very much contrasting diversion in their life, can remember all these.

7

Other Forms of Trataka

Class lecture, 1 August 1967

The best time to practise trataka is between 3 and 4 in the morning. You must not practise for more than half an hour in the beginning. After trataka you should practise either meditation or yoga nidra. Asana and pranayama can also be practised after trataka, there is no harm, but trataka helps meditation. If you sit down for meditation immediately after trataka the state of mind is completely quiet. Normally the sequence is asana, pranayama, trataka, ajapa japa.

Trataka should be practised as early as possible, in absolute silence without a fan. Trataka is a heat producing kriya so it should be practised soon after bathing when you feel quite fresh. If you practise surya namaskara before trataka, the body becomes heated and at the time of trataka you feel discomfort. Try to keep your body cool for the practice of trataka. If you go into meditation soon after the practice of trataka, the body becomes cool and refreshed again.

Trataka can be practised on various forms: a candle flame, a black dot, a photo or picture, *shoonya* (the void), the rising sun, the reflection of the sun in clear water, an idol or image, darkness, one's shadow, one's reflection in a mirror or a crystal. These are the main forms of trataka. There are also some other forms used in certain occult practices, for

example, to detect the whereabouts of stolen articles or to find out the person who has stolen them.

There are many different ways of doing trataka. For example, people who want to practise for this purpose take a teapot with a tea decoction in it, and then they look into it and try to discover the figure of the person. Some people take some black powder made from charcoal and mix it with castor oil, making a fine paste, and then they place a small amount of the paste on a betel leaf. At the left side of this leaf, they place a candle so the reflection of the candle flame falls exactly on the spot of paste. They do trataka on that shining spot to find out information.

Trataka on the rising sun

Those who practise trataka on the rising sun usually develop cataracts and become blind. I have met many, but still people do it. In the Hindu scriptures it is supposed to be one of the religious rites to look at the sun. Why is it done? For good eyesight, but it has been misunderstood by those who have not gone through the actual ritual associated with sun gazing.

When it is said in the scriptures that the sun is the giver of eyesight, people think it means that we have to worship the sun by looking at it. There are many rituals associated with this particular kriya which are kept under religious guard. One is when you practise trataka on the sun; you must never look at the sun directly. So, what do people do here? They just go to the river bank and look at the sun's reflection on the water. When I say trataka on the rising sun, I always mean trataka on the sun's reflection on crystal clear water. When the reflection is disturbed by heavy winds and storms one should not practise this form of trataka. One should never do trataka on a moving object. One should also be careful in doing trataka on metal because if the sun's rays are reflected on the metal, you do not know what the reaction will be on the eyesight.

Once there was one Swami Vishuddananda in India who had attained a particular siddhi by the practice of trataka on

the sun. He had become blind, but as a result of that practice he could experience everything inside himself. If you could remember any smell, he could give the experience of that same smell directly. Later on he was called Gandha Baba (*gandha* means 'smell'). He would say 'sandal' and you would smell sandal.

Many people in Benares can produce smells in their hands. So, by practising *trataka* on the sun for a long time, it is said in the scriptures that one becomes adept at producing any smell. Those who want to practise it should learn the technique from an experienced guide.

Trataka on darkness

Practise *trataka* on darkness in a closed room, in the jungle, in darkness where nothing can be seen, not even your own hand. Open your eyes and see darkness. Keep on looking at it for as long as possible without causing strain to the eyes. After some time, the darkness vanishes and visions start floating. According to some psychologists who have made experiments on this particular form of *trataka*, it is one of those exercises by which your subconscious mind and behaviour, your suppressed feelings, phobias and fears all come up in the form of visions and float in that darkness.

It is not at all desirable for those people who have an impure, restless and abnormal mind to practise this *kriya* because when they become quiet, the dark side of their inner consciousness or subconscious mind will express itself. Seeing this, they will be frightened and believe that someone has come into the room, either a dead body or someone to whom they have given much trouble; then they will become terrified and more abnormal. Therefore, *trataka* on darkness should only be practised by *mahatmas* and *sadhus*, who have sufficient mental control and detachment, and who have been leading a pure and disciplined inner life. In that state they will see the higher astral plane.

Trataka on one's shadow

This is known as *chhaya upasana*, concentration and awareness of one's own shadow. The method is as follows. Sit down with the sun behind your back and gaze at your shadow cast in front of you on the ground. Focus your gaze at the point of vishuddhi chakra on the shadow. There is no special indication there; you have to create this point mentally. Do trataka at vishuddhi on the shadow for six minutes or for as long as it is comfortable. When it is impossible to gaze for one second more, stop and look directly up into the sky.

Hold your awareness there and you will perceive a great shadow cast over the background of the blue sky. It is silver in colour and somewhat hazy. Go on gazing at the shadow until it disappears and then try to assemble it again, as I explained to you previously in antar trataka. It is difficult to gather it again in the beginning, but you may be able to do it once or twice. Then again resume trataka on vishuddhi. After a few minutes, look up again quickly, without any delay and gaze steadily into the sky.

It is true that by this practise the time of death can be predicted. You can become capable of reading the aura of anyone. Even if you don't know how to predict the death of another, imminent peril is immediately seen on the shadow in a clear vision. Those who are weak-minded, who fear death or pain, should not have any access to this practice. It should only be taught and practised by one for whom death and peril have no meaning. Otherwise this knowledge would cause one to start worrying about the future, about death, etc.

This kriya is associated with a mantra which is to be given, not verbally or publicly, but directly into the ear of the disciple. According to tradition, the disciple is called and during the initiation a lot of noise is made. When the noise is very loud, the guru goes to the disciple and whispers the mantra into his ear. The disciple is not supposed to listen and should not know what has been spoken. Then the guru writes the mantra down on a particular type of leaf and tells

the disciple to repeat it. The disciple discloses the mantra to no one at any cost because then it would lose its efficacy.

This is the tradition according to tantra shastra, which is not different to yoga, but its approach is different. The practice of yoga is meant only for achieving self-realization, while tantra sometimes experiments with psychic powers and occultism.

Trataka on one's own reflection

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the only available text on raja yoga in which all the forms of yoga have been propounded, a reference is found to this practice. In one sutra it is said that by doing trataka on one's reflection there is the possibility of losing awareness of the existence of one's own body. In Sufism, one of the mystic sects of Islam, they gaze into a mirror at a red or black spot placed between the eyebrows at trikuti and become enlightened.

You can practise trataka on your own reflection in a mirror or in water. The best time to practise is when the sun is high in the sky, not at night or on a rainy day or when there are clouds. If it is dark outside, then one should have sufficient light in the room so that there is less strain on the eyes.

When you practise trataka on your own reflection, always remember that whatever you see is a projection or manifestation of your own self, nothing comes from outside. While doing this form of trataka or any of the last three, if you experience the emergence of someone, not from your own body but from outside, then it is better to leave the practice because it will create a terrible fear in you.

I will tell you about one of my own experiences. I was sitting at a table on which there was a small mirror. I decided to do trataka in it. After some time, I did not know where I was. The whole world had changed. I do not know how long it took, maybe five minutes. Then I saw a snake on the typewriter on the table which came right up onto my chest, but when I got up there was no snake. It was such a clear vision which I still recollect distinctly. I knew it was

not physical, but I could not help experiencing that it was physical.

Actually, what changes is something within yourself. When a woman looks in a mirror and sees herself with a bear, it is her subconscious mind. These things come up gradually until you lose yourself. Then fear comes. The danger is not in losing yourself, but when you lose yourself, another form comes and you are afraid. This fear is terrible and cannot be analyzed intellectually or eliminated because at that time the intellect does not exist.

You are like a baby which cannot think. You move on the instinctive plane. So, if anything ugly, hideous or dangerous comes to you, you have no other option than to be afraid. If you have different samskaras, different patterns of consciousness and you see a monstrous figure, the instinctive mind might say, "All right, let it be."

There are moments in life when the mind functions on the instinctive level. Then we cannot eradicate fear, anger, etc., because we cannot analyze them intellectually. Why are we afraid while doing trataka? If I see a ghost, I tell myself that it is only coming from me, but this is difficult to do in trataka, because the intellect does not function. We are moving in the instinctive plane at that moment. Therefore, my advice to you is to practise the milder forms of trataka in which you do not have the tendency to lose yourself so easily.

Trataka on crystal

In order to use crystal as an object for trataka, you must practise in dim light, in a room which is neither too dark nor too bright. First spread a black cloth on a table, then place a stand on the table and put the crystal on the stand. You have to gaze into the crystal and not at the outside of it. The consciousness and the sight are to penetrate the heart of the crystal. When you gaze into the crystal, you see nothing. Here, trataka on an external object and on shoonya are combined. When you gaze into the crystal for a long time, everything goes black and visions come, even while your eyes are open.

There is an exception to the rule in this practice. Usually the period fixed for gazing upon an object is limited to about three minutes. However, crystal gazing is allowed for ten minutes, but the tears should not fall and the eyes should not be strained. You have to continue to gaze into the crystal for as long as possible without winking the eyes. The eye muscles should remain absolutely relaxed; the eyelids should not flicker. The moment you feel strain, you should close the eyes and rest them. You do not have to think of the crystal when your eyes are closed. A beginner should not strain the eyes. Gazing steadily, without winking the eyes, will eventually become quite natural, but if you try to look into the crystal for ten minutes on the very first day, of course, your eyes may be strained.

Those practising crystal gazing should keep it secret and not tell others. In India we have two types of crystal: sphatik lingam and jyotir lingam which are used for meditation. Sphatik lingam is transparent like a glass ball, and jyotir lingam is luminous, light. Concentration comes very quickly with sphatik lingam. The telepathic communications are automatic because crystal has the property of attracting sound waves. Radios also contain crystals which attract sound waves, but these are synthetic crystals. In Tibet, there is a mountain called Kailash made of sphatik crystal.

However, those interested in crystal gazing should take a jyotir lingam and not a sphatik lingam. The best place to get a jyotir lingam is in Varanasi. They are also found on the banks of the Narmada river. If you place the jyotir lingam under a flow of water, at any time of the day, it causes different shades, colours, visions and lines to appear. You simply go on gazing at it without any strain, and figures, snakes, elephants, jungles, rivers, landscapes, worlds being born and destroyed may also appear.

There are twelve places in India where jyotir lingams have been established: Somnatheshwar, Mallikarjuna, Mahakaleshwar, Omkareshwar, Kedareshwar, Bheemashankar, Vishveshwar, Tryambakeshwar, Baidyanatheshwar

(100 miles from Munger), Nageshwar, Ghushneshwar and Rameshwaram. These are the lingams on which trataka is practised. All these lingams are oval shaped except two: one at Kedareshwar, resembling the form of a buffalo, and the other at Vidyanatheshwar, which is very much depressed at different points.

Everything outside in the physical universe is drawn on the basis of an inner reality. The great seers saw the lingam inside without any previous knowledge of it, in a particular shape and that gave rise to an outer symbol. In the Upanishads it is said that trataka on an external shiva lingam is trataka on the inner astral body, and the shape which is seen outside is the same shape seen within yourself as your astral body.

By practising trataka on the jyotir lingam, the aspirant comes face to face with himself and learns the secret of birth and death. He is able to fulfil his spiritual ambitions. Finally he sees eternal life inside himself. This jyotir lingam, which I have been telling you about, is *swayambhu*; it is self-created, self-born. Nobody created it. Even before you were born, it was existing, because the subtle body existed before the birth of the physical body. The jyotir lingam is different on different planes of consciousness. In the physical world, it is seen in temples. On other planes, it is seen in the form of light. In order to worship this jyotir lingam, one need not use prayers, mantra or flower offerings, but one has to sit before the lingam, pour water over it and gaze into it, trying to assimilate its physical form within. Nothing else is necessary, not even religious sanctity. You can be Hindu, Christian, Muslim, a believer or disbeliever in God. You just sit down, place a bilwa leaf in front of the lingam and practise trataka.

There are also crystals in which you find figures of snakes coiled around three and a half times, just like in mooladhara chakra. In some, the head of the serpent is upward and in others it is downward. These represent the awakened and the sleeping kundalini.

8

Kali, Kundalini and the Unconscious

1 August 1967

What is the significance of Kali according to the Hindu scriptures?

Kali is a feminine deity, a symbol of the unconscious. She is depicted completely naked and her body is black or smokey grey in colour. She has six hands. In one she holds a dagger, in another the head of a man, in the third a bowl of blood. She wears a garland of 108 human skulls. Lord Shiva is lying beneath her and she is standing with one foot on his chest. Her mouth is open with tongue projected, full of blood. She is ferocious. Her temple is in Calcutta. The name of Calcutta was originally *Kali kata*, the place of Kali.

Kali is a symbol of the human unconscious, but remember that the lower manifestation of the unconscious is ferocious and the higher manifestation is glorious and beautiful. So the higher, deeper and more refined aspect of the unconscious is Durga. She is a beautiful lady with eight hands, representing the eightfold elements of man. Durga is seen riding on a tiger and she is supposed to be the remover of all the evil consequences in life.

Sometimes it happens that people get in touch with their unconscious due to mental derangement and they see ferocious things there, so it is said that the unconscious is full of inauspicious elements or tendencies. According to yogic

philosophy, the first manifestation of the unconscious is terrible power and it completely subdues the individual soul, i.e. Kali standing on Lord Shiva. She wears a mala of human skulls representing the memories of different human births. She is black or smoky grey in colour, the colour of the unconscious. She is thirsty for blood, which represents the rising kundalini.

Kundalini is the unconscious in man. That is why they say that kundalini should be awakened in the presence of the guru, otherwise the unconscious manifestations, like Kali, can put you down. It is a fact, and it is also said in the old scriptures referring to kundalini, that when this serpent power rises up with her thirsty mouth, she first of all drinks the blood, then eats the bones and sucks the life.

This is the occult rendition. Kundalini drinks away the blood on which the different bodies or incarnations were fed. Why are we born again and again? Because we have enough material to take birth. So, kundalini is Kali and Durga is the higher manifestation. Those who go through the path of kundalini yoga have to experience kundalini in the form of a serpent, but those who worship Kali only also go through the path of kundalini yoga, not knowing which way they are going.

Before the spiritual aspirant practises kundalini yoga he is expected to fulfil a few conditions related to the mental body. That is, some of the instincts which would otherwise manifest at the time of kundalini yoga practice are eliminated by discrimination, by spiritual understanding. If you are full of fear, passion and ruthlessness, then fear, passion and ruthlessness will come up. Those instincts of man should be properly subdued or eliminated from the personality. Before taking up kundalini yoga one should purify the *chitta*, the subconscious mind, by leading a pure life, by pure thought and philosophy.

Kriya yoga is actually kundalini yoga. The only difference is that it is not to be done as seriously as kundalini yoga. Kundalini yoga is a bit more violent, but as long as you are practising under controlled conditions, there is no danger. If you do more practice, you may feel more heat, a little bit

of stomach disorder and fever also, but it is not of much significance. However, if a man receives shocking news during kundalini sadhana, then his mind goes out of gear. He becomes so sensitive due to the practice that what would not have affected him in the past will affect him totally now.

As one makes more progress, one becomes more sensitive, something like an amplifier or fast film; one receives the influences so keenly and so fast. Sometimes a sadhaka really feels too much. Suppose I give you a bit of my mind. Ordinarily you would not take it seriously, but after making a little bit of progress in spiritual life, you will feel it very much. If I give you a bit of my mind, it becomes so piercing. So, during that period, such situations are to be avoided because you become so touchy. If anything serious takes place, you are unable to maintain control. In the beginning this danger should be avoided by practising under controlled conditions. Afterwards there is nothing to worry about. You can practise it independently.

The most wonderful thing that happens on the spiritual path is that you may be making spiritual progress and you will not know it if everything is okay, but if anything is wrong, you will know it immediately. Kundalini can be awakened by selfless service without knowing it or wishing any reward for yourself. Kundalini can also be awakened by kriya yoga. It can be awakened by leading a life of strict celibacy also, but that is a very difficult path in the sense that when it awakens, it awakens like an explosion. That is the most powerful method, but celibacy is to be observed to a very great extent in this path. There must be complete peace, tranquillity and equilibrium in the mental and physical body.

Is the purpose of all the different yogas to awaken kundalini?

Yes, it is to awaken the unconscious and that unconscious power in man goes up to meet the superconscious. The superconscious is Durga and the unconscious is Kali. That is the mythological conception.

In the skulls, are there different chakras holding memories of the past?

You must have seen the garland of skulls around the neck of Kali. These are the memories of different births, all symbolized in different chakras in our system. When the unconscious rises up to vishuddhi the man who was old looks like a young boy. In between these chakras there are many other accomplishments. It is seen that many people who develop the power of the unconscious lose it in between because they make use of that power, then it recedes back to its original state. The unconscious state evolves and then reverts back to the subconscious, etc. That is why the psychic states are changing, until it reaches the highest state, sahasrara. After this, it becomes continuous for all time.

When the unconscious reaches ajna chakra, one becomes the knower of the past and the future; the dimensions of time and space do not exist anymore. At bindu is the stage of pure dhyana. It is a spiritual stage; there is no psychic or occult manifestation. When the unconscious reaches sahasrara these developed faculties remain throughout life. There is no waxing and waning, no ebb and tide. It is all fixed and steady. Then one is a siddha or a yogi.

They say that when the unconscious power unites with supreme Shiva at sahasrara, the sadhaka becomes free from mental bondage. He enjoys supreme bliss. He understands the real nature of the world, all powers are in him and he can manifest them at will, but he will never do it. He is in the world, aware of it, but not of it.

The six hands of Kali symbolize or represent the six chakras. The dagger in one hand represents the dagger of supreme vairagya by which she cuts off the head. This vairagya is the absolute detachment of the personality. The head in her hand is the symbol of the head of this present reincarnation. The bowl full of blood in her hand is the karma of this birth.

It is said that the development of psychic faculties is accompanied by pains, which are psychic, not physical. What type of development do these sadhakas go through?

Yes, these pains come, but not in those sadhakas who have already purified their chitta. Usually all the karmas of the past birth and this birth are finished by the time a sadhaka reaches manipura. Most experiences are over in mooladhara itself. Before the awakening of kundalini, one undergoes many types of psychic pains, but that is subject to one's subconscious condition. If the subconscious mind is filled with purity and sattwa, one will never undergo such things.

In Hindu mythology, the awakening of Kali has been described in great detail. They say that when Kali rises up in red anger, all the gods and demons are stunned. Everybody keeps quiet, nobody speaks up. They do not know what she is going to do. This is the mythological story and you may interpret it accordingly.

Then they ask Lord Shiva, "Please go and pacify Kali." So he goes. Kali roars and puts the man down. She stands with one foot on his chest. Then the devas hold prayers to pacify Kali. They tell her, "You are the Supreme Creator. You are the counterpart of Brahman, the Supreme Being. Through you, all nature does its work. Through you, the Supreme Lord has created and maintained all that is manifest. You are the destroyer of this cosmos. Ultimately everything in this world is dissolved in you."

After many such prayers Kali becomes calm, quiet and peaceful. Then there is an emergence of Durga; the benign unconscious emerges from the ferocious unconscious. Durga is the giver of power and peace. That is the release of power from mooladhara. Kali is the primal, potential energy represented by mooladhara. Worship of Kali is still prevalent in India and I will tell you why. The greatest influence on the psychic body and mind is exerted by the conception of Kali, Durga, etc., the feminine goddess. These are the symbols or equation; they are only to convey a number of truths in one equation.

Am I right in assuming that the unconscious mind or unconscious personality is represented by symbols?

Yes, the unconscious mind responds to various symbols and pictures. Therefore, in different races, symbols have been designed in such a way.

Would you tell us about the seven lokas or veils of consciousness? Are they parallel to the awakening of the chakras?

Yes, it is one of the ways of expressing that. There are seven screens in the body. When we close our eyes and see a vision one screen is removed. When another vision is becoming very clear it means the second screen is removed. It is just a way of explaining it.

When the Christ force reappeared to the twelve disciples in the form of a dove or the Holy Ghost, then the Christ Consciousness had reached anahata chakra and they spoke in all tongues. Am I right?

Yes, they began to speak in all tongues, that is to say, they had developed yogic awareness. When yogic consciousness begins to awaken, you may call him Christ.

After reaching sahasrara is one fully liberated from the bondage of rebirth?

After reaching sahasrara, the spiritual state remains continuously; it does not change. According to the scriptures, such a sadhaka has to take one more birth to fulfil his last sankalpa. He is reborn only in a few types of families, either in a family which is pure and well-off, which is poor but intelligent, or in a family of yogis.

Are people whose kundalini has reached sahasrara very rare?

Yes, very rare, like Christ, Buddha and Shankaracharya.

Yogis generally do not reach sahasrara?

Yes, you are right. We all belong to swadhisthana chakra. Awakening of kundalini is an awakening of mass power, an explosion of Supreme Consciousness. It is not so easy.



9

Hatha Yoga

Class notes, 2 August 1967

In hatha yoga there are six original techniques:

- *Neti*: cleaning the nostrils
- *Dhauti*: cleaning the digestive tract
- *Basti*: cleaning the bowels
- *Kapalbhati*: cleaning the frontal region of the brain
- *Nauli*: rolling the abdominal muscles
- *Trataka*: gazing at one point

According to hatha yoga, one can start dhyana directly after practising these six kriyas, but meditation is not discussed here. Remember, hatha yoga is dealing with the coordination of two main principles of the human body. Drinking acid, walking on water or on fire and lying on a bed of nails are not found in hatha yoga books. Also, asana and pranayama do not originally belong to hatha yoga, but to the third and fourth limbs of raja yoga.

Limitations

Hatha yoga should not be practised when the body and its inner parts are emaciated. If there is any tendency towards puncture of the intestines, intestinal TB, peptic ulcers, liver abscess, etc., one should not practise hatha yoga. The practices of hatha yoga do not suit everybody, weak or

strong, worldly or renunciate. Hatha yoga should never be practised for physical feats or demonstration.

Precautions

These depend upon different practices:

- *Neti*: Neti should not be done after a hot bath. Do not wash the face and eyes with cold water after nasal cleansing with warm water.
- *Dhauti*: You must take food after forty-five minutes. Rice boiled in milk or in pure water is recommended. Do not eat cream, curd, fried food, strong citrus fruits (e.g. lemons) etc.
- *Basti*: Take food only once a day and do not vary the quantity of food every day.
- *Kapalbhati*: If practised as a pranayama the rules of pranayama are to be applied. If practised as a special cleansing exercise one should not eat curd, but milk without fat and buttermilk are recommended. After kapalbhati one must practise kapalarandhra dhauti (washing of sahasrara) to eliminate heat.
- *Nauli*: The abdomen should not be injured in any way. Do not jump from heights or lift any heavy weights. Stop the practice if loose bowels or constipation are noticed.
- *Trataka*: If you feel you are fainting or slowly losing consciousness stop trataka. Your cerebral structure is not fit to withstand the impression of the psychic point.

Sequence

This is the sequence of one who practices integral yoga with an emphasis on hatha yoga.

- *Dhauti*: before going to the toilet.
- *Neti*: during a bath.
- *Nauli*: after neti and asanas, but before pranayama and meditation.
- *Kapalbhati*: after pranayama with an empty stomach.
- *Trataka*: after asanas and pranayama, before meditation and yoga nidra. During hot season it should be done

only in the morning. In winter it can be done at night also.

- *Basti*: before a bath, but only occasionally to remove constipation.

Spring is the best time to start the practice of hatha yoga (March in India), when it is not too cold or too hot and there is no difference in temperature between day and night. There is a balanced temperature of body and atmosphere. Hatha yoga exercises should be intensified during winter.

Frequency

- *Neti* can be practised daily.
- *Dhauti* can be done nearly daily in the beginning in order to master it. Afterwards it can be done only if some disturbance occurs.
- *Basti* should be done only if there is constipation or too much heat in mooladhara or in the stomach.
- *Kapalbhati* can be done daily.
- *Nauli* can be done daily except on the day of fasting, during pregnancy, or after an operation on any part of the body.
- *Trataka* can be practised daily on a candle flame until achieving the psychic point, then practised on the inner psychic point.

Place of practice

The place to practice hatha yoga should be carefully chosen. Practise in seclusion, alone in a room with no object near you, just as you do asana practice.

Diet

There are many different opinions on diet. Some authorities recommended a lot of fat, milk, fruits, fresh vegetables, etc. This is an aristocratic point of view. I believe in a socialist diet. This means wholewheat, unpolished rice boiled in water which remains in the rice, green peas, corn, potatoes with peels, etc. Germinated beans and wheat are recommended.

All food must be digestible without any exercise. The digestive capacity of the body gained by exercise should be preserved for meditation. Yogic texts state that food should not be overspiced, overboiled, overtasty or overfried.

All fresh food is recommended except meat, fish and eggs. There are good scientific reasons why not to eat animal products, not only religious reasons. Meat contains poison produced by the animal body at the time of killing. Also, meat decomposes very fast. Digestion of meat, as with any food rich in protein but poor in acid, demands much secretion of digestive juices which the alimentary system cannot produce. Therefore, alcohol is used to help the digestive process. Fish contains a certain oil which causes allergic diseases. The liver is badly influenced. Eggs destroy the structure of the kidneys and cause albumen secretion in the urinary system, and the long-term effects of this are not beneficial.

Srikhand is the usual meal of hatha yogis. The water is removed from curd which is hung in cloth in a warm room for several days. Then cardamom and other things are added and the mixture is churned for several hours. A nice meal is obtained. Diet has been discussed in reference to hatha yoga only. However, the diet should be adjusted, not only for ordinary men, but for raja, karma and bhakti yoga it is also necessary.

Yogic texts

There are three ancient texts on hatha yoga written in Sanskrit by great yogis. They are *Goraksha Samhita* by Swami Gorakhnath, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by Swami Swatmarama and *Gheranda Samhita* by Sage Gheranda. All these texts are available in English.

10

The Tradition of Kriya Yoga

3 August 1967

Will there be another teacher training course after this one?

I cannot say, but the purpose of this course is to spread this method of teacher training in a correct way, in every country. The notes and transcriptions which we are taking every day should serve as a basis for future organizations in other parts of the world, maybe even in a better way.

How long will our kriya yoga instructions be for?

That depends upon one's mastery of pranayama and the discovery of the psychic passages. Otherwise everything in the practices is physical. While we are learning kriya yoga, you will have practically the whole day to think over the practices.

Should we make notes on kriya yoga?

No. When you are practising all day long and are able to gain mastery over it, what is the necessity of having notes? We take notes only of those things which we want to study and memorize later on, things which we have heard only once, but in kriya yoga we are going to hear the techniques many times. According to tradition, the kriyas should never be rendered in written form; at least it has not been done up until now.

Do you mean it should not be presented as a yogic technique, even in the future as some of the so-called secret techniques are now coming into light?

No. They were not secret. They were only considered secret in the sense that they were taught only to those aspirants who were found capable, but as far as publication is concerned, all the other practices were written down in books. So let kriya yoga come from the guru. If it is read in books, it may only go up to the intellect, but if you learn it from the guru, it will get embedded in your subconscious mind.

You have many students here who will be teaching yoga throughout the world. Should they teach kriya yoga to others?

I think that as a rule it should not be taught. However, when the qualifications are fulfilled, then there is a particular tradition in India, according to which the disciple is allowed to teach kriya yoga to aspirants. Then he is given the idea of when to teach and when not to teach.

Do you think that you will give this initiation to some of the students of the Teacher Training Course?

Well, that is my aim.

I have heard that Swami Sivananda was asked to build a mission by Babaji. Is this so?

Yes, he ordered him to build up a mission. As a matter of fact, Swami Sivananda received initiation into kriya yoga from Babaji, but he did not teach these techniques to anyone himself. At the time I was leaving the ashram, however, he taught me all the techniques in not more than twenty-five minutes.

Where does Babaji usually stay?

Usually we don't know his whereabouts because he keeps on moving from place to place, and people might see him, but they can't recognize him. Last year one of my students, a

Czech girl, was travelling in central India when he sent her a message to meet him. When she arrived in Bombay, she was asked by another student, “Did you meet Babaji?” She said, “Yes”, and immediately she went into a trance and began to make the sign of the cross and all sorts of signs. She said so many mystical things within fifteen minutes.

How are some people more psychic than others?

There are some people who have developed psychic faculties by nature, by birth, or by certain happenings in life. It is important that those who are psychic should be controlled by a guru or a master for whom they have respect, otherwise they are always destructive. This is so in every case where there is a developed psyche and no one to control it. It is like a car without a driver.

Is it true that people who are mentally deranged in this birth, often have misused their psychic faculties or powers in a former lifetime?

It may be true but it doesn't necessarily apply. According to occult doctrines of karma, those who have misused their psychic power in a previous incarnation, are reborn with diseases of the skin. In the scriptures it is clearly stated, however, that those who have misused siddhis in a previous incarnation, are born dissipated. Their mental faculties are shattered and they are almost lunatics, not in the sense that they do not understand, but due to the unbalanced state of mind which is prevalent.

Then most of the mental cases are psychic?

No. People who are mentally deranged are not always psychic in nature. In my opinion, mentally deranged persons are those who have lost the intellectual awareness, who behave and respond on the instinctive level. It means that somehow or other they have fallen back from the intellectual level. There are also those who are not mentally deranged to that extent, but they are emotionally upset. It means they

have fallen from the intellectual height to the emotional depth, and they act and think from an emotional basis. Then there are people with neurosis. They are absolutely mad. They can eat, talk and walk, but they are not aware of what they are doing. Somehow or other their intellectual capacity has ceased to function. There might be paralysis of the pituitary gland or certain faculties of the brain.

Do you think it is possible that a psychic person might be considered to be mad and put into a mental hospital?

Perhaps it is possible in the West, but not in India. Here, when a man is deranged and talking nonsense, they do not send him to the lunatic asylum. First they look at him and ask him many psychic questions pertaining to telepathy and other psychic faculties, searching questions. If they find that his subconscious mind or his inner mind, his unconscious mind, is able to give correct replies, then he is known as *oulia*, a person who is behaving in eccentric, abnormal or lunatic ways, but has siddhis of one or more kinds.

In Maharashtra there was one such person known as Gajananda. People used to find him sitting where all the dirt and refuse of the town was deposited. All day he would sit there searching through the refuse as a mad man would do. People used to go to him and ask, "What are you doing?" He would reply, "Oh, don't worry about me. What about you? Your father is dead." He used to speak about different sorts of things and later on they were found to be true. When people would offer him food he would say, "You steal money every day and you bring me food. Throw it away and get out of here." Ultimately he was recognized as *oulia*. That is the name given to those people who look mad, but are highly psychic in nature. These people are offered everything, but they do not care for it.

Another such man was called Dhooniwala Dada (Grandpa near dhooni). Nobody dared to approach him and people believed that he was a terrible, angry man. If you said anything to him he would give you one thump on the head

and tell you to get out of there. Once, a lady went to him with a baby and asked, "Please bless my child." He took the child and was about to throw it, but the women grabbed it back. Ultimately the boy became the great capitalist of India, Nafatla, which means 'penniless'. Dhooniwala Dada used to sit naked. When people came to meet him he would go on abusing them, using all the slang in the market and he would reveal all sorts of secrets.

Another such person was Sai Baba of Shirdi. He was a fakir with miraculous powers. Nothing is actually known about his birth, but it is believed that he was born of a brahmin lady and fathered by a Muslim. Out of shame his mother abandoned him somewhere at birth and he was brought up in a homeless atmosphere, wandering from place to place. Finally, he came to Shirdi where he lived for many years.

So there are people who look mentally deranged, but they are highly psychic. There are people who are not mentally deranged, they are mentally unbalanced, but highly psychic, and there are people who are mentally alert and yet highly psychic. These categories can be understood and recognized, and God has a purpose and mission to fulfil through them.

Unless psychic powers are used for spiritual development they do not last long and they leave the man bankrupt, disappointed, full of disease and a total wreck! Sometimes people who misuse psychic power must suffer, they must be given a lot of suffering so that others can learn a lesson from them.

11

Japa Yoga and Symbol

Class lecture, 3 August 1967

Much has been spoken about japa yoga, but not much has been believed. Previously the opinion was that one could only awaken the higher consciousness through meditation and samadhi, not by this method known as japa. Of course everything has changed now, but ten years ago they said that japa was only meant for sadhus and old ladies. Taking a mala and uttering something like *Om Hrim Klim* early in the morning seemed to be a very strange practice. This important aspect of inner communion, of psychic development, of individual awakening, has been little understood in spite of the fact that all religions have given special emphasis to it. In India there are many ancient texts written in Sanskrit on japa yoga and some of these have been translated into English more recently by such scholars as Sir John Woodroffe who was the Chief Justice of Calcutta during the British rule.

According to Swami Sivananda, japa yoga is the easiest, cheapest and safest way to self-realization. It is a system which can be practised by all, is absolutely free from the slightest danger and is undoubtedly efficacious, although it may take a little more time. The rules of hatha yoga are difficult to follow. If you want to practise pranayama there are certain requirements and restrictions. If you do not understand the instructions, if you make a little mistake or

something goes wrong, then all is lost, but even if you do japa yoga incorrectly nothing will go wrong. When you sit for japa it is not important if you hold your body erect or not, if your eyes are open or closed, if you take a bath before or after the practice or if you have constipation or diarrhoea. There will be no danger at all.

Rotation of consciousness

The word japa in Sanskrit means 'to rotate'. You must have seen the faithful Christians and Hindus rolling beads. Actually, the turning of the mala represents the rotation of consciousness; it is not just the rotation of beads. The word japa means 'rotation' and the word yoga means 'union' or 'communion'. Two things becoming one, losing the difference of duality, is called yoga. So the meaning of japa yoga is union with the highest existence through rotation of consciousness.

What is consciousness? Consciousness is a term referring to awareness, whether it is mental, psychic or spiritual. Even the unconscious is a state of consciousness. In this practice, however, we are primarily concerned with mental consciousness or awareness. Rotation of consciousness means that there should be a point at which you set your awareness rotating and after some time you come back to the same point where you started, without missing it. During the rotation your consciousness may go this way or that, it may go in a triangle, not necessarily in a circle, but you must always return to the starting point.

There are many different ways of practising japa. Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Parsis all use a mala or rosary. Mahayana Buddhists use a mala also and, according to tradition, they have a special wheel called the dharma chakra, which means 'the wheel of virtue'. This wheel is full of mantras and they rotate it with their hand. Some are very large and fill up a whole room, while others are small. By rotating the wheel, their consciousness also rotates 500, 600, 700 times and, after a certain number, it is drawn inside.

A circuitous route

In yoga there are many practices recommended only for those who are physically and mentally fit, whose lungs and heart are in order, who can sit in padmasana for three hours with their spinal cord erect, but what about the average man who cannot fulfil these prerequisites laid down in higher yoga? What can he do? Please think this over. The requirements for kundalini yoga, the type of constitution one must have, the type of food one must eat, the type of atmosphere in which one must live, all these are difficult conditions for the average man to maintain.

Of course, a man who has spiritual associations, a peaceful environment, a little money and freedom from responsibilities, can practise higher yoga if he chooses, but for that he must go into retreat somewhere. He must live in solitude for twelve months and this is impossible for the ordinary man. So the rishis, the great thinkers of the past who pondered over this problem, devised the system of japa yoga, by which the ordinary man could awaken the kundalini, the spiritual power, not quickly, but slowly and steadily.

Therefore, japa yoga is not a short path, but a sure path. This has been said by all the mahatmas and saints. Japa yoga is a very circuitous route. You have to climb the hill, not by going straight up to the top directly, but by making many rounds. This particular sadhana is especially useful for those people with infirmities, inhibitions or abnormal complexes because it does not require intensive effort or strain.

Japa sadhana

It was said by the sage Narada that japa brings the aspirant to God. Here, in India, there are thousands of aspirants who practise japa daily. This type of sadhana is started on special days, usually during a solar or lunar eclipse. On that day they will start the repetition of a particular mantra they have received from the guru of their choice. Some people receive initiation into a mantra which can be used to remove

snake poison or various diseases. There are many different types of mantra sadhana which are practised initially on solar or lunar eclipse days and continued from that time for fifteen days, forty days, three months or nine months, in a particular manner.

Everyone in the home who has a mantra is supposed to practise it, but there are special days on which one has to repeat the mantra as much as possible, maybe 600, 700 times or more. Japa can be practised at any time, but the best time is in the morning or evening after bathing. However, those who are doing a particular sadhana for the awakening of psychic power are asked by the guru to practise their mantra at a certain hour of the day or night, perhaps at midnight or at two o'clock in the morning. However, this is only done for special purposes, such as the awakening of power, healing, hypnotism or telepathy. For general purposes, such as meditation or mental purification, there are no time restrictions. Before going to bed at night and when you get up in the morning you should take up your mala and do japa.

Japa with a mala

Japa is always practised with a mala. Some people ask, "What is the use of the mala? Can't we just do the practice mentally?" but the answer is "no". In japa we use the mala because it is essential that the consciousness has a base for rotation. Without the mala you cannot rotate the consciousness so you cannot do japa. When you practise the mantra with a mala it is called japa and when you don't use a mala it is called ajapa japa. That is the difference.

There are many different types of malas made of rosewood, sandalwood, tulsi, rudraksha, coral, crystal or seashells. Amongst them, rudraksha mala is supposed to be the most powerful and the most correct for different types of japa. Rudraksha should be used while repeating the mantra of Rama, Shiva or Krishna. A crystal mala should be used by those who have a psychic mantra of Devi.

In the selection of a mala the diet must also be taken into consideration. Only those who are pure vegetarians should use tulsi mala. Those who take meat and alcohol must use rudraksha. Those who do not take meat, fish and wine regularly, but on certain occasions, can use the crystal mala. Those who practise raja yoga, the yoga of pure meditation, should use a rudraksha mala. Those who are not keen on meditation should use coral or seashell malas.

Mantra initiation

In the ancient scriptures it is said that mantra diksha, initiation into mantra, is the first requisite in japa yoga. The mantra should be heard directly from the guru and that sound alone should be repeated. It is not enough to know a mantra by which one has been impressed and to repeat that. There are people in India and abroad who have received a mantra in a dream. That is also a traditional form of mantra initiation. I know a person who received a tantric mantra by dream at the age of nine. This mantra was unknown to anybody, it was never written down on a piece of paper, but was only received by verbal initiation in a dream.

In India this is not unusual and there are many examples of people who have received mantra in dreams. However, it is very difficult to say where this mantra comes from, whether it belongs to the conscious mind, the subconscious mind or if it is a reflection of the unconscious mind. However, the mantra which is received in dream must be accepted as a revelation and it should have a powerful impact on the conscious mind. The first mantra you receive, the first instance of revelation in dream, should be considered as final. After that, if your subconscious mind tries to present another mantra, you should not accept it.

When you have received a mantra in dream, that is initiation. The first mantra should be the last. According to tradition, an aspirant must have one mantra only and he should never take any other or meditate on any other.

It is said that by the practice of one mantra, one comes to know the glory of all mantras; one can experience them all through the one.

So, mantra initiation is final whether through dream or through a guru. There is no other provision for receiving a mantra. You cannot say, "This mantra came to me through inspiration", because perhaps the inspiration comes from your own mind. Therefore, you must receive a mantra either from a guru or from the order within yourself. This is mantra diksha, though ceremonies differ in various sects, communities and religions.

Psychic symbol

According to tantra, every mantra has a particular symbol which constitutes the form of the sound and a particular deity. That symbol is not a physical form, but a psychic form, a psychic symbol. So, in the practice of mantra, the first stage is reflection on the sound and rotation of the consciousness 100, 200 or 600 times, until the awareness is absorbed inside. Then where are you going to establish it?

The ingoing mind must have a place to stay and that place is known as the symbol. The symbol should be decided properly. When we talk about meditation on the symbol, many people ask, "Can I just take any form and meditate on it? If the symbol can be any object, then I can concentrate on my head, my book, or any image?" Remember, the symbol on which you concentrate must have a physical counterpart. All the objects which we can see externally, such as a crescent moon, a star, a cross or Om, are the physical counterparts of symbols already existing within us.

Each mantra has a particular symbol according to its sound vibration. Om has its vibrations. A combination of vibrations makes up the mantra and according to the different vibrations, a particular psychic symbol is constituted. The sounds 'ka', 'kha', 'ga' or 'ta', 'the', 'da', have different sound ranges. When combined in a certain order they make a psychic symbol.

There are also many other symbols which can be selected just for concentration without any corresponding mantra such as a rose, a lotus, a cross, a crescent moon, a candle flame, a temple, a serpent and so on. In ancient times this science of symbols was propagated and preserved by the Aryan race. Ishta devata is another kind of psychic symbol. Ishta means 'astral being' and devata means 'deity'. For some people the psychic formation of a human being is easier to concentrate on than a cross or a moon. Why? Because every person has a different composition and, according to that, a particular form may suit his mind or not.



12

The Unrecorded Life of Christ in India

5 August 1967

I have heard that Christ spent some years during the early part of his life studying in India. Is this true? It is also interesting to note the similarity between the births of Christ and Krishna. Is there a possibility that these two could have actually been one and the same?

Christ and Krishna were two great luminaries and the stories or myths surrounding their births are very similar. The story tells how Krishna was born in Mathura, where his parents were kept under house arrest by the wicked King Kamsa, who was Krishna's maternal uncle. On the night of his birth, Vasudeva escaped with him across the river Yamuna to Gokul. Then the king, who feared that this child was destined to destroy him, had all the babies in that region killed. It is the same as the story of the birth of Christ in the Bible.

There are two currents of thought regarding the similarity of these stories. One school of thought says that Christ and Krishna are not different, they are both the same. Even in India, Lord Krishna is known as Kristo; they don't say Krishna. In Bengal and Orissa they say Kristo. Therefore in India some people say that the story of Christ is actually the story of Krishna which must have emigrated from India to the Middle East, just like the story of Rama emigrated from India to other parts of South-East Asia. Even today the

story of Rama is retold in Java, Sumatra, Bali, Cambodia, Borneo, Thailand, as it is in India.

This is one theory. There is another theory which says that Krishna and Christ were never really born. Some of the ancient thinkers wrote a story about the *atma*, the individual or inner soul. Krishna is the inner soul which manifests through this body. This body is a prison in which the individual soul is caught and this particular body is ruled by the will or the tendencies of the mind, represented by Kamsa. I am discussing all the angles here, not only historical, but esoteric as well. For people belonging to different religious communities, the esoteric interpretation is also necessary.

Suppose this body is the prison and imprisoned here is the *atma*. Now, this body is guided and ruled by the mind, and this bad or evil mind does not allow the soul to come out. Whenever the soul tries to come out he kills it, but there comes a time in every man's life, whether he wants it or not, that the soul must manifest. When the soul manifests, it is the birth of Krishna. When *atma* wakes up from sleep and comes out, it is called the birth of Krishna. When the *shakti* is awakened the evil mind is killed. The father of Krishna was Vasudeva. He was kept inside the prison. This is the esoteric interpretation. Here we don't go into history.

Now we go on to Christ. Christ was the son of a carpenter. What is a carpenter? He makes a chair and a table out of many pieces of wood. In the same way, this body is also made of many pieces which are joined by a carpenter. Who is that carpenter? Nature.

Christ is the inner light, the light of the soul. This light had to remain amongst the Jews who represented the mental *samskaras*, the impressions of the past, the different superstitions, motives and tendencies that a man has. Christ roamed amongst them and he tried to tell them the truth. In the same way, your pure reason also tells you, "Don't smoke, don't drink", but the mind does not care. It says, "If I have to listen to you, I will kill you." Just as the

Jews said to Christ, "You are a sorcerer, a black magician; you are not a prophet."

Christ is the light, the pure reason of man, which tells him where he is wrong, but man does not care to listen. Ultimately the worldly attachments and motives of man suppress the soul and then it goes to the cross, but the soul does not die, it comes up again. The cross is not death. It symbolizes the awakening of kundalini, the spiritual power in man.

Christ was crucified on the cross, but he did not die. That night he was taken down along with the criminals who were crucified by his side. The soldiers came and put a spear into his body. In the Bible it is written, "... and the water flowed out". You understand the point. It means to say Christ was not dead because water or blood does not flow from a dead body.

Christ was not dead when they took him off the cross. They put his body in a cave and rolled a large boulder over the opening. Many people were guarding the cave, but Christ's disciples knew very well that he was still alive. So they came to the cave at night to dress his wounds and nurse him. By the third day he was alright and he left the cave.

Therefore, they say that Christ rose from the dead, but what it actually means is that he regained his senses. Later on, Christ saw Thomas, one of the disciples, going to the village and he followed him. Thomas looked around and asked, "Who are you?" and Christ replied, "I am Christ come again." Thomas said, "No, you were crucified," but Christ said, "I am the Christ, I tell you." Then Thomas said, "I don't believe it, you are dead." So Christ showed him the signs and then the belief came that he had descended from heaven.

When Christ went to his disciples, many had left him because they were afraid of being persecuted. So he thought, "What is the use of wasting time with these people? I have my own communities in other parts of the country." Then he left Jerusalem, the place of his birth,

and came to Kashmir. In the Bible, if you remember, it says that twenty-three tribes of Israelites migrated to Kashmir. After reaching Kashmir he died because his body was very emaciated after the crucifixion. There is a grave dedicated to Christ in Shrinagar. The name Isho Asap is written there. I have visited the place.

Christ preached the Gospel, not only to the people of Jerusalem, he preached it also to his kinsmen in Kashmir. In fact, many places in Kashmir bear the same names that you find in Jerusalem, such as Palestina, Galilea. From Kashmir, some of his disciples, John, Thomas and others, went down to the west coast of India. There, in Malhatad, is the oldest church in the whole world built by the disciples of Christ. The first Gospel came to India as early as the third or fourth century, but Christianity was first preached in India and then it went outside. That is my conclusion.

Then you would say that Christ and Krishna are definitely two different personalities, not one?

I think that Krishna and Christ were two. Krishna died 5,000 years ago. Every day when we worship in the temple, a particular mantra is chanted. It is a twenty line mantra which says, “On this particular day, on the banks of the river Ganga, in the province of Bihar, in the land of India, surrounded by the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, north of Ganga, south of Yamuna, on Monday, the fifth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Kartik, 5,000 years after the death of Lord Krishna, 2,521 years after the death of Buddha, I, Swami Satyananda, make the sankalpa and with this purpose go to worship in the temple of Shiva.” This mantra changes daily according to the place and date. It is chanted regularly in every house and temple.

So, there cannot be any mistake, because in India the way of worship is so precise. According to this mantra, it is very clear that Krishna died 5,000 years ago, and, according to history, Christ died 1,934 years ago. So they were two separate personalities and we should not confuse this.

Do you think, on an esoteric level, Shiva can also be considered as a saviour like Christ and Krishna because he drank the poison in order to save the world?

Yes, at an esoteric level we can compare the three. Christ consciousness, Krishna consciousness and Shiva consciousness are the higher currents, the higher forms of energy that develop in a human being. Therefore, the characteristics are very similar. Christ died for all the sins of mankind and Shiva drank all the poison to save humanity.

It is said by some clairvoyants that the story of Christ on the cross did not actually take place in public, but it was a ritual in the Egyptian religion. So Christ could never have been crucified in Israel.

No. Christ was crucified. There is even a reference to it in the Koran and in some of the ancient Hindu books as well.

In those times so many people were crucified. Is it possible that the wrong person was identified as Christ?

No, because he could be identified by Peter whom he followed when he was entering a village. Peter asked for the evidence and Christ said, "Judas betrayed me and you disowned me."

There is a new theory about all this which I heard in the esoteric circles. They say that the Romans were not interested in the crucifixion of Christ because they feared a revolution. They are considered to be the ones who nursed Christ after the crucifixion.

There seems to be some mistake. In my opinion, Christ was a great revolutionary leader of that community and these Romans were simply afraid of him. After Christ was crucified and he had left the place where he was teaching, the Romans came and completely destroyed it. They even ploughed the land.

Forty days after his death there was a great earthquake and most of the land and houses were completely finished.

Then the Romans came and wiped out the remaining population. It means that they did not want to give Christ a chance to escape. They wanted to annihilate the community so there would be no resurgence and they could do what they liked. They were very happy that Christ was dead and the priests were very happy also.

What about Christ's earlier years? Did he come to India?

We have two references to Christ in Indian books. One is in the ancient records of Nalanda University, 100 miles from Munger. At its height, 1,000 students were studying there free of cost. The university had an enormous library containing hundreds of thousands of texts which was destroyed once by Bhaktiyar Khilji, the great invader, and again by the Hindus. Twice it was burned to the ground and thousands of ancient texts were lost.

In the registers of the Nalanda University Gazette there is a reference to a man from Palestine who is described as the son of Mary, son of a carpenter, not liked by his people, a tall figure with a beard. In the book it is also said that, "Out of the thousand students, he was a most remarkable figure." This is one reference. Another reference was found in the ancient records of Nepal which states clearly that a student of Nalanda by this name, belonging to this race or community, visited Nepal and met many pandits there. There is also a reference to Christ living in Benares for three years. Altogether, he lived in India for thirteen years. If you read about Christ's life in the Bible you will find thirteen years are unrecorded. Where are these thirteen years? India has the answer.

The Bible says nothing is known about these years.

Yes, but India had a reference to this great man even before his birth. Some of the Indian astrologers, wise men from the East, were aware of his stars and knew he was destined to be a great prophet. When Christ was born, three wise men journeyed from the East following a star. They did not follow

these stars; they followed the star of his horoscope. They went in search of the place where the prophet was being born. They went there, saw the boy, then came back, and there is a reference to it.

Now, I am coming to the philosophy of Christ which is simply a combination of Buddhist ethics and Hindu bhakti. *Bhakti*, love of God, self-surrender, “Thy will be done” – that is his teaching. Christ gave ethical instructions and Buddha also gave similar commandments. When Christ came to Nalanda he liked Buddhist ethics very much, but he saw the imperfection in it. He saw that it lacked faith in God, so he said, “When I go back to my people, I will teach the Buddhist ethics plus faith in God”, and he preached those commandments from the Mount of Olives.

The philosophy of Christ was a blending of Hindu faith and Buddhist ethics, which he came across in Nalanda, Varanasi and Nepal. Nepal is a land where Hinduism and Buddhism have blended into a homogeneous culture. Even Brahmins eat meat there; it has religious sanction. Varanasi is the centre of Hinduism and Nalanda was the centre of Buddhism. So Christ went to study in these three places and he learned three different philosophies which he later combined.

It is definite that Christ was born and that from birth he was greatly inspired. He came to fulfil a mission, but he did not find the atmosphere conducive in his birthplace so he went to India because this was the land of spiritual culture. Just as we go to America or Germany for technical training, Christ came here to Nalanda, Benares and Nepal, and then he went back fully illumined. Christ knew pranayama and he must have been a hatha yogi. He also had certain psychic powers, because he brought Lazarus back to life. He cured many people and he walked on water.

When Christ returned to Jerusalem, he preached what he had learned to the people there, but they did not understand him and they crucified him. However, he survived and came to Kashmir, perhaps wanting to return to India, but he could

not make it and died in Kashmir on the way. This is what we believe in India. It may not be what you believe in the West.

I think we will have to believe it because in the West the things which Christ did are all considered to be miracles, but they are explained in yoga.

Yes, to perform a miracle is not a big job for someone who has come down with a specific purpose. Krishna performed miracles. Christ performed miracles. Even in our time, Sai Baba was a man of miracles. There was also Swami Nityananda, a kundalini yogi who died a few years ago. He behaved almost like a madman. Many people would not go to him because in the same compound where he lived beneath a tree, (he had no house), tigers used to lie down quietly by his side just like pet dogs.

Swami Nityananda became very famous, but he was not conscious of what he was doing. He was beyond the normal senses. His disciples took care of him. I was with him for one hour. He would not talk directly to anybody. He would go on talking to himself and the people who were standing by his side would try to understand the meaning.

When Swami Atmananda was there, standing by his side, he said, “No use of clothes, all dress is useless, everything is useless. Sannyasa, tyaga – that is the great thing.” The mahatma was looking over at the other side while speaking and hundreds of people were standing around. He did not tell her directly, but he continued, “Go away, go away. Don’t stand here. Get out.” So we had to leave that place. That was only a few years ago. Now a large community has grown at the place where he stayed, near Bombay.

Another mahatma who I can reference is Tailanga Swami. He died at the age of 192. Once, a big officer went to him with his wife. He was very fat when he bowed down. This mahatma caught hold of his wife and said, “How are you?” The officer was very annoyed that the mahatma was touching the shoulders of his wife, which is strictly prohibited in Hindu society. He said, “I must kill this mahatma.”

The next day he brought prasad of some milk in which he had put poison. He gave the milk to the mahatma to drink. The mahatma said, "All right, I will drink the milk and you will take the prasad (the result of it)." So the mahatma drank the poison and the other man immediately began to feel pain. He cried a lot and ultimately the mahatma, who was accustomed to eating human dung, said to him, "Can you eat this dung? If you do, you will be all right now. I will eat and you will eat." The pain was so terrible that the man ate the human dung and the mahatma also ate it. As a result the pain ceased and the man came to his senses. Then Tailanga Swami said, "You know, for me, human dung and your wife are both the same. I behave towards both with equal interest."

That lady became his disciple and she is still alive. Her name is Shankan Mai. She does not make public appearances. She is too old, ninety-five years or more. She comes out of seclusion once in twelve years and you can see her at the Kumbha Mela held at Allahabad, Nasik, Ujjain or Haridwar. Otherwise nobody knows where she is.

Such people are well known to us so we can easily accept the stories about what Christ did. Perhaps he even did more that we don't know.

There is a beautiful analogy in the life of Swami Sivananda – he shampooed and oiled the feet of sick people. Christ also served the people in that way.

Swami Sivananda had great powers, God only knows! He used to wash the petticoats of ailing women and he served lepers and disabled persons in his own dispensary.

13

The Stages of Japa

Class lecture, 5 August 1967

Japa yoga is practised in the following stages:

- *Vaikhari* – audible
- *Upanshu* – whispering
- *Manasic* – mental
- *Likhit* – written
- *Ajapa japa* – with the breath, without the mala.

In tantra shastra, certain mantras are given which must be chanted verbally; there is no option. The method for each mantra is prescribed in detail: the speed of repetition, the pitch of the voice, the number of rounds which the mantra is to be chanted. This is *vaikhari japa*. There are different rules prescribed for other mantras which may be either chanted audibly or repeated mentally.

This is the method of *japa* found in the tantric texts. However, yoga presents an altogether different view of the practice. According to Swami Sivananda, the *sadhaka* should first practise *vaikhari japa*, audible repetition, by producing sound vibrations. After some time, those sound vibrations will gradually charge the brain and, as a result, the mind will become quieter.

At that time one should take up the practice of *upanshu japa*, repetition in a whispering tone, in such a way that only oneself can hear it and no one else. In this type of *japa* there

is lip movement, but no audible sound. It is guttural. By this practice the mind is trained to become quieter. Then one can begin the practice of *manasic japa*, mental repetition of the mantra without moving the lips or tongue, or making any movement in the throat.

When the aspirant has made good progress in this way and his concentration has started to develop, then he should take up an additional practice – *likhit* or written japa. Here, the mantra that you practise with the mala should be written in a notebook with red or blue ink, as many times as possible, using utmost concentration. The letters of the mantra should be perfect and fine. *Likhit japa* is higher than mental japa, but it cannot be practised independently. It must be practised along with mental japa, which means that, while writing the mantra, the practitioner should repeat the mantra mentally.

In India, during the month of Shravan (August to September), there is an old tradition which still exists today. They collect 100,000 leaves of bilwa. There are three petals per leaf. On each petal they write the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya* with the stem of the same leaf dipped in kumkum or sandalwood paste. Generally this is done by ladies. They sit all day and write without moving from that place. The next morning they go to the Shiva temple and offer the leaves to Lord Shiva, repeating the mantra verbally every time they offer a leaf.

The last and highest kind of japa is *ajapa japa*, in which you do not use the mala for rotation. You just become aware of the breathing cycle and repeat your mantra along with the breath, or hear the inherent mantra of the breath.

The importance of vaikhari and upanshu

Manasic japa is for those who have a steady mind. However, vaikhari and upanshu do not require a steady mind and can be practised by all. Now, what will be the result if a person wants to start at once with mental japa without practising first the audible and then the whispering types of japa? If the practitioner has a steady mind, then he will certainly make

substantial progress, even if he starts with mental repetition right from the beginning. If a person who is restless by nature, whose mind is dull or of wavering tendencies, takes up manasic japa without first training his mind by the practice of vaikhari and upanshu japa, then he will find himself dozing. During the practice his mala will slip from his hand without his knowing it or else his mind will remain on the same bead.

In order to check this dozing tendency, or to enable the aspirant to become aware of the mind if he becomes absent minded, the practice of vaikhari and upanshu are necessary in the beginning. If you are repeating the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya* in vaikhari with closed eyes and after fifteen minutes you find that you have spoken something else, it means that during that period the mind was not focused on the practice, it was somewhere else. If mental japa is practised before audible japa, then the mind will have the same tendency of missing the point in between, but you will not be in a position to be aware of it.

Many aspirants believe that they have a steady mind, but actually they have not. The moment they close their eyes, they do not know where they are. If you ask them, "How did you feel during that practice?" they reply, "Oh, I felt wonderful." That means they were sleeping or absent minded during the practice. When the mind becomes absent, it loses the intellectual sequence of the words or syllables of the mantra. Audible repetition is very helpful in order to check such mistakes. These mistakes can only be corrected in the beginning. Later on, this break in the consciousness, this confusion of the psychic awareness, cannot be rectified.

Akhanda japa

In India there is a special type of sadhana in which vaikhari japa is emphasized. Here, audible repetition of mantra is done on certain occasions in chorus with a mala. Mantras can be chanted in different tunes. For example, they take the mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya*, and chant it in a particular tune.

Sometimes this mantra is sung continuously for one year or more. There are places where a mantra has been sung for the last eight hundred years without a break. Special trusts are set up for this purpose.

In the ashram to which I belonged in Rishikesh, continuous repetition of the Mahamantra, *Hare Rama, Hare Krishna*, has been going on since 1943. It is sung twenty-four hours of the day in the same tune and at the same speed. It has gone on without a break from the beginning and I have felt that this continuous chanting of mantra creates an atmosphere which is very powerful.

I remember the first day I entered the ashram. This *akhanda japa*, unbroken recitation of mantra, had been started three months before. When I entered that big hall, I felt as if I were entering an air conditioned room. That feeling is still vividly fresh in my memory. A certain type of magnetism is released by the audible repetition of mantra. It is a very powerful practice.

Japa for a specific purpose

By the practice of vaikhari japa, you can bring about a psychic state in which the conception of the psychic symbol becomes very easy. If you want to meditate on a particular object and you find it difficult, then practise vaikhari or audible japa for about one hour and then sit for meditation. The object will become very clear to you.

This type of audible repetition can also be done for therapeutic purposes in order to charge the brain. This is not only my own experience, but also the experience of those who are expert in therapeutic hypnotism. If you ask a person to repeat a particular mantra for hours together, the mind will enter a particular psychic dimension where it becomes very receptive. In this state of mind, whatever you suggest to him will penetrate deep into the consciousness and become a powerful influence on the total personality. Those who are addicted to bad habits or suffering from various diseases can get rid of them by this type of therapy.

Upanshu japa is done in whispers. Usually it is practised by those who want to do japa for eight to ten hours a day with a specific purpose. According to mantra shastra, a mantra can be used for correcting the errors of destiny and setting the motion of life into order. Whether it is true or not, people believe in it. As a result, there are certain mantras which are used for specific purposes. I would like to cite one example of this.

Once, when Sir John Woodroffe (alias Arthur Avalon) was Chief Justice of the High Court in Calcutta during the British period, he could not give a final judgement in a particular case, in spite of all the efforts he made. He was at a complete loss due to the state of his wavering mind. So, he made a probe into the affair and came to know that the parties were both performing mantra japa in a particular manner in order to reverse the case. Every time the mantra of one side or the other became powerful, the mind of the judge was affected. Like a pendulum it would swing this way or that according to the intensity of the mantras being chanted by the two sides.

This experience made Sir John Woodroffe take up the study of mantra and tantra shastra. He went to different gurus right up to Nepal and got initiated into the tantric practices. He was the first Western scholar to do deep research into tantra and mantra. This example is given to bring to your attention that mantra has different ranges of effects. It can work wonders. It can even make a solid object move.

Those who want to use mantra in order to influence another object or person, must practise the specific mantra for this purpose. Those mantras are repeated in upanshu or whispering tone. Mantra is a science in which the mind is converted into force and force into effect.

Guidance of a guru

According to tradition, japa should always be practised under the guidance of a guru who is a good and benevolent

person without any selfish motives. Usually in India people take mantra initiation from a guru who they trust will not exploit them mentally, socially, psychologically, physically or financially. When they are satisfied regarding these five points, the elders ask the person to be initiated. On the day of marriage, every Indian girl should have a mantra. If not, she is not allowed to enter the kitchen. She must be initiated.

The purpose of japa is to attain a receptive state of mind, but you must remember that the guru, that person to whom you are spiritually related or united, has got nothing to do with your mind. He is just your benefactor. He knows your defects and shortcomings also and tries to help you overcome them.

Guidelines to the practice

When ajapa japa is done after vaikhari, upanshu, manasic and likhit japa it is very powerful. According to Swami Sivananda, ajapa japa has supreme effects on the human mind. Likhit is less powerful, then manasic, upanshu and vaikhari.

Vaikhari is done while keeping the eyes open. Upanshu can be done in the same way, but it is better to do it with eyes half closed. Manasic japa can be done with half closed eyes, but it is better to do it with closed eyes. In vaikhari, trataka can be done; do not gaze intensely, just look. In upanshu the object remains half visible. In manasic japa the eyes are closed and the reflection is drawn inside. It is better to do japa with an object to concentrate on, rather than having no object.

If you already have a mantra and you know how to practise it, then do three parts vaikhari, two parts upanshu and one part manasic. The Hindu tradition says that once you are initiated into a mantra you should continue it throughout your life. In order to succeed in the practice, you must have faith in the mantra which you have received in initiation and stick to it right up to the very end. Japa yoga may be a long path, but it is sure and certain.

14

The Effects of Japa

Class lecture, 7 August 1967

The practice of japa yoga is primarily meant for awakening the psychic awareness in an average individual. By the practice of japa certain effects are produced in the physical body itself. Unless the practice of japa has some effects on the body, mind or senses, it is impossible and illogical to believe that japa can bring about psychic awareness.

We all know that beyond the body are the senses, beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the psyche, and beyond the psyche is the spirit or *atman*. So, if japa yoga is able to influence or awaken the psychic body through the physical body, through the senses and the mind, we have to think, what are the possible effects of the practice of japa on the human personality?

One might say that in the practice of japa one just has faith that one is changing, whereas apparently there is no change. However, scholars have made thorough investigations into the physical, psychological and even para-psychological phenomena which occur due to the effects of japa on the human system. Many scientists have conducted experiments on the effects of sound on the human mind. Later on they came to know that sound has form.

Then some of the para-psychologists or members of the psychic research institutes were astounded by certain

findings which showed that thought can reach another person. Evidence was presented and an amount of data collected from which the question arose, "How does thought travel?" Through experiments conducted in different parts of the world, they concluded that a particular thought which is strongly generated in the mind can be transmitted to another person. They even concluded that a thought can become an object.

Effects of the long-term practice of japa on mental activities

If we consider all these theories and then try to decide the effect of japa on the human system, we have a clear picture before us. The practice of japa creates a certain frequency in vibration and the greater the frequency, the more effective the practice is. It is true that the practice of japa has a powerful influence on the human system.

First of all, the practice of japa has a certain effect on the senses of man. By senses, I mean the five sensory organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin; and the five organs of action: hands, feet, speech, excretory and reproductive organs. You are well aware of the activities of the senses, such as seeing, hearing, etc. These are their natural activities. By the practice of japa, the senses enter into a state of withdrawal. If a person has turbulent senses and he wants to calm them down, he should practise japa for an extended period of time. As a result, the activities of the senses are minimized.

By the practice of japa one thing is sure – the mind becomes less turbulent. Anxiety neurosis, sex neurosis and other disturbing complexes of the mind become calm; one attains a state of peace. The effect of japa is similar to the effect of a tranquillizer, but of course the effect of japa is more abiding.

Another comparison I would like to make is with narcotics. When narcotics are used the mind becomes peaceful, calm, dull and depressed. Physical activities are at the lowest ebb and there is no alertness, whereas the

practitioner of japa has all the above mentioned benefits plus alertness. This is the fundamental difference.

Another difference I have found is that, in the case of a narcotics user, the lower tendencies of the mind or of the subconscious seek fulfilment, whereas in the japa practitioner the lower mind is superseded by the higher mind. As a result of this he is tranquillized, but he is quite alert. Even if he is normally full of passion, anger, jealousy, etc., during the practice of japa his mind is absolutely free of them and the more he practices japa, the more he feels this.

The effect of japa can be felt even after two weeks of practice. A person who is overwhelmed suddenly by anxiety, restlessness and doubt, can be helped by this practice even if he has no faith. All he has to do is patiently practise the japa for ten to fifteen days according to the rules prescribed, then, although he may not become a self realized man, he will free his mind from abnormal, false complexes.

The effect of japa on the mental activities is that it brings about a state of tranquillity tempered with alertness and a noble background of thoughts. The effect of japa on the physical processes is that it decreases metabolism. The more you practise japa, the slower the metabolic processes become. It is just the opposite of pranayama. This is why those who practise a special course of japa are asked to combine it with asana and pranayama, and to take only a light diet during that time. Japa has another important effect on the physiological processes – it gives peace and rest to the heart.

The effects of japa on the psychic nature

Man is psychic, there is no doubt about it. Some people are more psychically developed, others are still developing it, while some are sceptical about the psychic nature; but man is psychic. I personally feel that it is on account of the psychic nature in man that he has developed religious faith and superstition. If man were not psychic perhaps humanity would have no religion.

Our faith in God is basic proof that we are psychic. We may have any concept about God – the God of a scientist, the God of a philosopher, the God of a primitive or of a sophisticated man, but the fact that we have a concept of God proves that we are psychic. Some people do not believe in God, yet in their heart of hearts they do believe in certain psychic phenomena like telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. All these things point to the fact that man is primarily psychic.

What is this psychic nature? I think it is an indication or glimpse of an instructive knowledge in man; something which he has not seen, but about which he has heard. Sometimes he does not believe in what he has heard, yet the belief that there is something beyond the body and mind, although it may be different to what he has heard, shows that man's inner nature is psychic. A man who has developed this belief or glimpse of the conscious mind, even a little bit, is called psychic.

Instinctively and subconsciously every man is psychic, because he has developed this glimpse or belief in the supernatural and he is trying to discover if there can possibly be something beyond this visible universe. Therefore, an inquiring nature, which in Sanskrit is called *jigyasa*, meaning 'desire to know', develops. As a result of the desire to know, one makes certain inquiries, either within oneself, before one's elders, in books, or from any professional, religious or even sceptical person. That shows the psychic nature of man.

What is the effect of japa on the psychic nature? By the practice of japa the glimpses of a psychic nature that are partly unconscious and partly subconscious come to the conscious mind. Hence, the more you practise japa, the more you become aware of the psychic nature, because what is originally hidden in the subconscious and unconscious manifests itself by the practice of japa on the conscious plane; you consciously become aware of the mysterious things. The practice of japa thus improves the psychic quality in all cases.

The effect of japa on the atmosphere

By atmosphere I mean of a certain place, not an open atmosphere. In order to make myself clear, I shall tell you the following story. In a small town in India called Khamgaon, near Nagpur, there is a small ashram where a mahatma by the name of Pasalegaonkar lives. Venomous serpents come there and they constantly bite the students, about 150 boys studying Sanskrit, and the visitors, but nothing ever happens to them.

Amongst the serpents, one can find poisonous vipers of a turbulent type whose bite normally causes instant death and medical science has no A.V. serum. One day I stayed as chief guest at this ashram and they honoured me by bringing a number of people from the town and garlanding me with a viper. Normally one is garlanded with malas. I was sitting with my eyes closed and I felt that something cold was being placed around my neck. When I realized it was a deadly viper, you can imagine my reaction, but the mahatma said, "Swamiji, don't be afraid. In this atmosphere snakes will not bite you." Outside that compound, however, if the same snake bites a man, he will die.

It is very difficult to say whether some chemical thing has been sprinkled in the atmosphere or the snakes there are hypnotized. I saw with my own eyes, a snake become dull after biting a man, as if it had taken some poison. This lasted for about half an hour, after which it slowly crept back into its box. So, we can understand that the atmosphere of a place can influence and be influenced by the activities of the inhabitants within that area.

The effect of japa on the atmosphere takes place through the subtle mental vibrations. Thought has form, colour, frequency and speed. Occultists and people who have investigated these matters say that every man has a pattern of thought. For example, I am thinking of duties, of yoga, of the students, of good and bad, but it is only for the last few years that I have been thinking these things. Ten years ago I was thinking of serving my guru, twenty years ago I

might have been thinking of japa, thirty years ago about my education.

Although the thoughts are changing from time to time, there is a fundamental pattern of thought in man which undergoes very slow evolution and change. This is called the personality. The sum total of subconscious impressions, of all the desires, makes up the personality and that personality has got what we call an aura. Now I am thinking of having a drink of water or of going to the railway station, but these thoughts do not change the nature of the aura.

Some people have a very dense aura, others have a very clear aura, and still others have a very confusing aura. There are certain persons who can radiate their aura anywhere. This means that when one develops a character or nature of thought in one's mind or personality, then that nature of thought gradually starts to radiate. It is like heat which is being absorbed in water, and after this process, the water starts radiating heat. In the same manner, first the mind is saturated with a certain thought, and when the entire personality has been saturated, then the radiation starts. Exactly in the same way, when one practises japa, the effects are first borne by the body, mind and psyche, and when that is complete, the whole body and life is saturated and starts radiating. That radiation is usually depicted as a halo around the pictures of saints such as Zoroastra, Christ, Rama, Krishna, Shiva, etc. That is why it has such an effect on the atmosphere, because that subtle aura and the subtle vibrations of the atmosphere get plugged into each other.

Swami Sivananda says in his book that there will be a different atmosphere in a place where thirty or forty people or more practise japa, whether singing, with a mala or otherwise, and such places should be kept free from other activities. For example, in this place, where we have been studying and doing japa in the morning and evening, an atmosphere will develop and anyone entering this atmosphere will feel it.

Japa and spiritual awareness

Although we have been talking about psychic awareness, there is something higher than that, which is the ultimate answer, which is a secret personality, a secret thing. Spiritual awareness is said to be the awareness of the self within, but it is a state of unconsciousness of outer and objective consciousness. When one approaches spiritual awareness, one becomes conscious within, but gradually one becomes unaware of the outer objects and events, including oneself.

In short, it should be enough to say that the practice of japa develops spiritual vision in the aspirant. This means that japa is something like a drug, the effects of which are spread throughout the personality, not only restricted or limited to the body as in the case of drug treatment, or to the mind in the case of hypnotic treatment. The effects of japa are unlimited. They are widespread from the body right up to the psyche. This is why, not only the great saints, but even ordinary men everywhere have stuck to this method and process of japa.



15

Japa Anushthana

Class lecture, 8 August 1967

Japa anushthana is a very useful and practical topic, the understanding of which will help the spiritual aspirant in his further study of tantra shastra. *Anushthana* means the performance, observance, accomplishment of an act, with absolute discipline, according to either a self-chosen or a prescribed, detailed plan. The plan usually includes items pertaining to: 1. time element, 2. geographical place, 3. type of asana, 4. number of mantras, 5. type of mala, 6. weather conditions, 7. recommended diet, 8. duration, 9. rules and regulations, 10. types of japa anushthana.

The resolve or sankalpa to do a particular act with absolute discipline, according to a definite plan, pertaining to the above-mentioned items, is called anushthana. When anushthana pertains to japa, then it is called japa anushthana. When it pertains to the study of books on philosophy or spiritual science, it is called jnana anushthana. When it pertains to the observance of austerities, it is called tapasya anushthana.

Japa anushthana as a psychic discipline

Japa anushthana can be practised for two purposes. One is for purification of the self, chitta or atman, for spiritual progress through psychic discipline and awakening of

higher forces or kundalini. The second purpose is for the attainment of a selfish purpose on the psychic plane of consciousness, such as material gain, position or prestige.

Any practice that liberates the higher forces without giving us self-control is disastrous. Therefore, the aspirant on the spiritual path will be required to undergo the practice of japa yoga or japa anushtana in a particular manner for the disciplining of the psychic body or psychic behaviour. Psychic disciplining means the disciplining of a major range of the subconscious mind. If the latter is not observed, the mind will be unbalanced through premature awakening of the higher forces, kundalini.

Just as there are physical disciplines and drills by which the body is brought under control, exercised properly and purified, there are mental disciplines by which the thought processes can be checked. Similarly, japa yoga is performed for the disciplining of the psychic body and the sadhaka can gain control over voluntary habits, nervous reflexes, tranquillity of mind, etc.

Selection of mantra

When japa anushtana is performed for spiritual purposes it constitutes a part of bhakti yoga or the yoga of devotion. When japa anushtana is performed for the fulfilment of a selfish motive or attainment of *siddhis*, psychic powers, then it is a part of tantra shastra.

In the first case, the aspirant can select his own mantra and the type of anushtana, or he might receive the mantra in a dream or in meditation. It is advisable, however, to seek the help of a guru. The guru is aware of the psychic personality, of certain defects and inclinations of the sadhaka to react too intensely or with unbalanced emotion, etc. For example, the mantra of Durga (the Devi or symbol standing for the higher aspects of the unconscious) is a powerful mantra, which releases great forces when repeated. It would definitely have an adverse effect on the sadhaka with uncontrolled emotions and unbalanced mental faculties, by

arousing these powerful forces before he is able to control his emotions and mind.

The effect of *Rama* mantra is very soothing and calming on the mind. The Shiva mantra will usually develop a sense of detachment, of ecstasy and absolute indifference. An aspirant with these attributes in Hindi is called, a *masta*, which means ‘one who is carefree or even absolutely blissful.’

In the second case, where japa anushtana is performed for selfish ends, the sadhaka must seek the help of an expert in the science of tantra shastra. The tantric guru will initiate the deserving disciple into a particular mantra for achieving a particular aim and he will prescribe the minutest details pertaining to the performance of the ritual.

The importance of correct pronunciation

In order to achieve the desired effect with a particular mantra, regardless of its intended purpose, it is of utmost importance that the correct pronunciation, not only grammatically but also phonetically, be taught by an expert. It is stated that the advice of a guru must be sought at any rate and in any case. A mantra which can be selected from a book is only for achieving its ends, whereas the *bija*, or seed, mantra, which is recited together with the mantra, is only effective when a guru charges it while giving it to the disciple.

In order for a mantra to be effective, it must produce the intended sound waves through correct pronunciation. This will produce the corresponding colours and, in turn, will create the intended geometrical forms and figures. This procedure should be intensified and accompanied by proper thought waves. Besides the correct pronunciation, the proper intonation, pitch, mental concentration and application of the creative mind or imagination is most essential.

Number of mantras and malas

The number of mantras is calculated according to the number of syllables, one lakh (100,000) mantra for each syllable. So, a mantra with five syllables should be repeated 500,000 times. A mantra with twelve syllables must be repeated 1,200,000 times.

A mala or rosary is used for counting the number of mantras. *Mala* means beads, flowers or pieces of stone joined together by a thread. Usually the mala has 108 beads. In the mantra repetition, only 100 mantras are accounted for with each mala. Eight mantras are lost in the final accounting. For example, one mala equals 100 mantras; three malas equals 300 mantras and so forth.

Duration

The swiftest rate of mantra repetition for a five-syllable mantra is assumed to be 40 malas per hour. So, in order to complete 5,000 malas, at the rate of 40 malas an hour, one takes 125 hours for a five-syllable mantra. These 125 hours can be divided up according to the convenience of the practitioner. If three hours are set aside each day for japa, it will take 125 divided by 3, approximately 41 days to complete.

So, the recitation of this five-syllable mantra for 41 days, 3 hours a day, under the consideration of the above-mentioned factors, makes one anushthana. An anushthana should be completed as quickly as possible under the given circumstances. Therefore, the aspirant has to check his limitations and possibilities. The time can be divided according to the convenience of the sadhaka, but once the time is fixed, no alterations are to be made.

Selection of place and asana

There is a psychic law of nature that is discussed in many occult scriptures and in books on modern criminology. It is said that a human being is constantly emanating a psychic substance or energy which is called an aura. This aura

can be seen, felt and even smelled by other individuals. The smell can be a pleasant aroma or a bad smell. For this reason, the following considerations must be made in the selection of both the place and seat or asana for the anushthana practice.

Once the asana and the place are selected, it should never be changed. The place and the asana will both be charged with similar vibrations emanated by the disciple during the anushthana. As soon as the aspirant sits down on the successive days of his sadhana, the psychic energy or conducive vibrations will help him in his practice. Thus the greatest benefit can be derived.

The *asana*, or seat, can be one of the following: a tiger skin, deer skin, kusha grass or a blanket. The asana must be completely new and fresh. Anushthana for purification requires a deer skin, blanket or kusha grass. Tantric anushthana requires a tiger skin or kusha grass. While repeating the mantra, the aspirant must face either east or north.

Selection of mala

The four types of malas used for japa are tulsi, rudraksha, *sphatik* (crystal) and sandalwood. The appropriate mala must be selected according to the mantra. Certain mantras require tulsi beads, others rudraksha or sphatik. One mala must be used for one mantra only. A mala that is used for japa must not be worn by the aspirant and a second mala must be obtained. A mala that has a broken bead must be replaced with a new mala. Old malas must be disposed of in the Ganga. A mala can be restrung with silk thread only, not gold, silver or copper.

Ideal weather conditions

In deciding the time and season in which to do an anushthana, the rule is neither too hot nor too cold. The most favourable time here in India is from 15th July to 15th September.

Diet

If japa anushthana is practised for seven to nine days, a diet of fruits and milk twice a day is suggested. Only cow's milk is allowed. If the anushthana is practised for fifteen days, a diet of *puri* (chapati fried in ghee or oil), *saag* (green vegetables), curd, milk and fruits is allowed for lunch, and in the evening only milk and fruits. If the anushthana is practised for two to six months, the aspirant is allowed to take *puri*, *saag*, milk, fruits, halwa and dried fruits. Rice and chapatis are not allowed during that period of time. Anything that creates acidity or fermentation in the system is to be absolutely avoided.

Applied japa

When several japa anushthanas are performed over a number of years, certain forces are released and great energy is stored within the disciple. If japa anushthana is performed for self-purification and spiritual progress, then the energy released will be used for that very process and directed towards that aim.

If the anushthana is performed according to tantra shastra, then the aspirant stores up a great amount of energy which needs to be released and waits for expression. This involves a certain ritual which will only be taught by the guru to the deserving and devoted disciple after the guru finds him purified and ready to serve humanity. Then the guru will give specific and personal instructions how to release the power of mantra for the benefit of others with the help of mantra anushthana. In this case, the disciple will have to recite ten percent of the total sum additionally, which will be ritually offered to the fire on the very last day of the anushthana.

Reference to japa anushthana is found in tantra shastra, a system of Indian occultism, which deals with techniques and methods to release psychic energy. This energy can be used to achieve either positive or negative results.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

During anushthana can the asana be changed if discomfort arises?

The asana can be changed if physical discomfort arises, but as a rule, the practitioner should not leave the premises. During the days of anushthana, the aspirant should confine himself to a particular task or to a particular atmosphere in order to avoid great change.

Should the practice be done at one stretch or in short sittings throughout the day?

In the ancient texts it is written that three hours of practice should be done at one stretch. In between, a short break can be taken for stretching the limbs, then the practice should be continued.

During japa anushthana, how should the time be allotted throughout the day?

Along with the practice of japa, the study of books pertaining to spiritual topics, such as the Upanishads, should be undertaken. At least eight hours should be devoted to anushthana, eight hours to the study of books and scriptures, and eight hours should be given to rest.

How should the mantra be practised during anushthana?

The practice of japa during anushthana is mostly mental or sometimes in whispers.

What if the practitioner has to go the toilet during the practice?

During anushthana, if the practitioner has to go to the toilet, he should leave the mala and cloth which he is wearing on the asana and should use another cloth for going to the toilet. After going to the toilet or urinating he must take a bath. The subtle body of the practitioner should be kept as pure as possible during the practice.

Should the ishta mantra be discontinued during anushthana?

During the performance of anushthana, the regular practice of ishta mantra should be interrupted and taken up again as soon as the anushthana is completed.

How long should one wait after meals before continuing the practice?

During anushthana the disciple should wait for two hours before taking bath or doing japa.

Is it necessary to keep a jyoti burning during anushthana?

An *akhanda deepak* or *jyoti*, eternal light, should be kept burning during the anushthana. It should burn in ghee and not oil.



16

Mantra, Rishi and Devata

Class lecture, 9 August 1967

We are taking up an important aspect of japa yoga – the science of mantra. As you know, *japa* is the practice of mantra, but something more should be explained and understood about this subject. Many people think that mantra is a part of language, dependent on rules of grammar and with a certain meaning, as any other sentence has. They also think that a few people knowing Sanskrit or other ancient languages have formulated these mantras. However, I can tell you that the science of mantra did not evolve in this way.

The origin of mantra

There is a particular method by which the mantra always originates. Unless it originates by that method, it cannot be a mantra; it will be a sloka. In Sanskrit texts you will come across these two words: mantra and sloka. *Sloka* means ‘a verse’, such as a sloka of the *Gita*, *Ramayana* or other scripture. They are lines of poetry. So, the mantra is not a sloka. It is not spoken, written or thought. It is revealed stuff or sound.

According to Vedic etymology, the literal meaning of *mantra* is ‘that which was released in profound meditation’. The word mantra is a composition of two roots; ‘man’ plus

‘tra’. *Man* means ‘profound meditation’ and *tra* means ‘releasing’, just as the power is released. So mantra is a revealed sound. How does this happen?

In the human conscious, subconscious and unconscious, there are different images, forces, ideas and impressions. In the subconscious and unconscious mind these take the form of symbols. In dreams, in meditation and in general behaviour, we express our subconscious mind through symbols. This has been discussed in modern psychology in great detail.

In dreams what we usually see and hear are said to be symbols of the subconscious. There are also symbols of the unconscious, but they are not revealed to everyone. They are only revealed to a very few souls and they are very powerful people or, I should say, very pure people. These people are able to hear the sound or the word of the unconscious and that word is mantra.

Mantra is revealed in a very deep psychic state, where the individual is completely lost to himself and to his worldly experiences, and when nothing but the inner light shines in front of him. Those sounds are called mantras which are heard by him when he is aware inwardly at that time, or maybe a little before that. It is in this sense that we always say that the Vedas, Bible and Koran are the word of God; they are not written by man.

Always remember that if the conscious mind is completely withdrawn and the subconscious mind is also completely withdrawn, then a third power comes into operation within. When you have no power over yourself, at that time, certain revelations take place. These are usually known by rishis. In Sanskrit the word *rishi* means ‘of inner vision’. So now you see the difference between sloka, mantra and rishi.

Seers of the unconscious

Therefore, the mantras which often occur in tantra shastra or in mantra shastra are the mantras which were revealed to different people at different times. Why so? Why was a

particular mantra not revealed to all? Why were different mantras revealed to different people? The answer is very simple. Always remember that the unconscious of each person is different. It is only the superconscious that is the same in everyone. Mantra is revealed by the unconscious and everything in the unconscious mind. The unconscious impressions, the unconscious emanations, are different.

Who are these people to whom the mantras were revealed? The right word for these people is rishi. Rishi does not mean a saint or even a mahatma. Rishi means a seer. Seer of what? A seer of the unconscious. Do you know what the unconscious is? It is not something that you would call completely dead stuff. No, it is unconscious in the sense that the outer consciousness is not there, but it is not a negative state. In that sense, those people who have been able to see their own unconscious are called rishis.

So, the unconscious is a force. It is not the void of consciousness; it is not a state of negativity. It is more powerful than this state where we are at present. It is a different state of consciousness and this state of consciousness is not present here. Therefore, we say that the unconscious is not the ordinary state of consciousness. The rishis were those who entered into this state and came in contact with the primal sounds of their being in profound, deep meditation. They realized the sounds they heard as mantra. Sometimes they also heard richa.

Richa means 'a collection of mantra'. Later on these richa were compiled and became the revealed books, not only of Hinduism, but of other religions as well. The Vedas are said to be revealed books, but then some people say that they were written down with pen and ink, so how can they be revealed? It is only the people who practise those things that can understand them. Sometimes in profound meditation a whole speech is given that we remember and in that profound meditation a force emanates from the depths of the ocean. You can see that. When that unconscious force awakens one is called a rishi.

Forms of thought

Therefore, always remember the state of rishihood is just before samadhi. You will find it is not so difficult to attain this state. After some practise you will be able to set aside the physical consciousness. For the time being or maybe for a few minutes, different sounds will be heard and these sounds are not different from you. In this context I can tell you that every thought has a form. It may be either a geometrical form or a human form. Then again, every thought has a pitch, just as in music there are pitches and different ranges of sound.

There are some thoughts which are so subtle that although they are there in your mind, you are not aware of them and there are certain thoughts which are so big, so loud and so intense, but still you don't see them. It is exactly like the range of musical sound. Sound is perceivable within a certain range and beyond that range it is imperceptible to human ears. In the same way, the human mind is unable to conceive thoughts beyond or below a certain level.

Therefore, thoughts are so subtle that we are unable to know them and they come in the form of symbols. The Greeks used to feel that these thoughts have therianthropic symbols, which are figures having animal and human bodies combined and in a way they were right. You see, it was not just a mental configuration. All human thoughts have roots in animal memories, in the memories of animal bodies. That is why in many of the ancient symbols you find figures which, for example, have the upper body of a lady and the lower body of a fish or a cobra, or the upper body of a man and the lower body of a tiger or a goat. You must have seen many such things and that proves that the human mind has evolved recently on the level of thinking and intellect, while still retaining the animal instincts intact.

In India, however, the conception of thought was anthropomorphic, which means we consider that thoughts have human symbols. The Egyptians and some of the other ancient races considered that thoughts have geometrical

symbols, and that concept of geometrical configuration was adopted by India in the tantra shastra. For instance, the first symbol of the unconscious is the inverted triangle. These geometrical symbols were actually considered to be figures of thought.

Mantra devata

Now, as I told you, thoughts have colour, form and pitch. If you produce a particular thought in your mind, you are producing a particular form also of which you are not aware. We have always been thinking about our thoughts in the context of the language which we have learned in our motherland. When I think about going to Calcutta, it brings to my mind thoughts of the ticket, the money, the train.

Now, you should try to observe the form of your average thoughts for some time every day, otherwise, it will not be possible for you to understand what exactly is meant by the form of thought. Every thought, even this speech I am giving now, produces certain forms within the consciousness. These are not merely ephemeral bubbles, but actual forms. From the sound a triangle is created or maybe a straight line and from there it might take another shape.

So these mantras also have forms which are known as mantra devata. Here devata does not mean a god, although in the dictionary you will find that meaning is given. The literal meaning of the word devata, according to Sanskrit composition, is derived from the primal sound 'dyu', which means 'to enlighten or illumine'. Primal sound is that which is not composed by man, but by nature. Dyu is always used in the sense of enlightenment or illumination.

Devata means 'illuminated stuff'. Any object which is illuminated in the darkness is devata. When there is darkness everywhere you can't see anything. The consciousness is like a torchlight. It just gives light to an object; it sees an object. The object which is seen in the light of consciousness is devata. Therefore, in the unconscious state, in samadhi, when everything is dark and no object is experienced, and

even the awareness of 'I' is completely cut off, then your consciousness expands. In the course of that expansion you become aware of certain objects inside, certain figures, and those are called devata.

When the rishis were in the depths of meditation, they had the realization of two things at the same time, mantra and devata. They not only heard the sound, while hearing the sound, they also saw a figure. Every revealed sound has a revealed symbol. In samadhi, in the depths of the unconscious, you hear and you see. When you are taking up a particular mantra, you must have a very clear conception of mantra, rishi and devata. You must know what mantra you want, to which rishi it was revealed and what is the symbol.

Rotation of mantra

When you have understood these three points, then you go to the fourth point which is the rotation of mantra through the centres. The centres are the thumb, second, third, fourth and fifth fingers of both hands together. A certain mantra is chanted while concentrating on a particular centre. It is almost like yoga nidra, but with mantra. You have to circulate the mantras through the centres. How are these mantras revealed?

In the beginning one letter is revealed to the rishi. It is the first letter of the mantra, for instance, the sound *Krim*. For days together he just listens to that sound. He comes out of meditation and the next morning again he sits, goes inside and follows that sound. Ultimately, the sound expresses itself in the form of a mantra, for instance, the bija mantra is *Hrum* but the mantra is *Om Namah Shivaya*.

The seed mantra is seen by the seer first and then gradually it begins to express itself in different syllables, it may be long or short, and this is called mantra. There are some mantras which apparently have a certain meaning when they are revealed and there are some which do not have any meaning at all. We may call them, literally, meaningless.

Now, with the help of the bija mantra, the consciousness is taken to the thumb, second, third, fourth and fifth fingers of both hands together; after that to the palms together, then to both sides of the chest (which is called *hridaya* or heart centre), then to both eyes, and to the shoulders with the arms crossed. Ultimately, you go to bindu, but you do not touch it, just snap the fingers above bindu. This is done by the Christians also, although of course, not exactly in the same way.

In this way the consciousness is rotated through the different centres of the body. In Sanskrit it is called *anganyasa* and *karanyasa*. *Kara* means 'hand'; *anga* means 'limbs'. *Nyasa* means 'left or deposited', to leave something behind, but this does not mean to forget. We leave the mantra consciousness in certain parts of the body.

When we practise *anganyasa* or *karanyasa* according to japa yoga, it is believed that we leave a particular amount of the mantra consciousness in that part of the body. We are creating a certain amount of energy which is to be left in the different parts of the body. When you deposit that energy there, it remains until the japa is over. Ultimately, when you have finished your japa, there is a method of withdrawal. You withdraw the entire consciousness and again you are free.

Invocation of the deity

Before starting the practice of japa, invocation of the deity is necessary. During invocation certain prayers have to be said. These prayers are not in the form of begging, but in the form of calling. In Sanskrit we call it *stuti*. For this particular purpose only certain slokas should be repeated, not all. Although in Sanskrit there are many prayers in which the author is demanding liberation, money, prosperity or peace, in this practice nothing like that is being done.

In the invocation there is a clear-cut picture of the deity or the devata, for instance, the well known deity of learning, Saraswati, is figuratively described, giving a clear picture of

her. Here, in India, there are anthropomorphic symbols of all descriptions and there are therianthropic symbols also, but the geometrical symbols are not in common use; maybe they do not have the human touch.

Invocation is a part of the esoteric science of japa yoga. When the invocation is done, it should be in very clear language. Everything is kept ready for that. There are beautiful songs and incantations. After that, the spiritual aspirant takes up japa with the mala in the way which shall be explained later.

Withdrawal of consciousness

Finally, we come to the last item of japa. This is very important, but only in connection with anushthana, not in connection with daily japa. When japa anushthana is completed, a particular act is performed known as *visarjana*, which means 'withdrawal of consciousness'. After completing the anushthana, the psychic power that has been released during this one or two months of intensive practice should not be dispersed throughout the physical body. It should be withdrawn and kept under control. If this is not done, then it is bound to react on the psychic plane. As a result, many people who practice japa anushthana in an untraditional way become a bit abnormal.

So, on completion of japa anushthana, *visarjana* is done. How it is done is not mentioned clearly in any of the scriptures. Perhaps they did not want it to be known publicly. This practice is not performed in connection with daily japa because here very little energy is produced.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Please explain the difference between the subconscious and the unconscious.

In the subconscious state of mind, one is aware of one's past memories and also partly aware of oneself. In the unconscious state of mind, one does not know who one

is, where one is, whether one is thinking or not thinking, while in the subconscious state there are visions and dreams, and from there one goes to the waking consciousness. In the unconscious there are no visions or dreams and, until one comes out of that state, there is no going back to waking consciousness in between. The experiences in the unconscious are almost lifelike, almost like real objects. For example, the visions in meditation are subconscious, while seeing a ghost is unconscious.

What is the purpose of remembering the rishi along with the mantra and devata?

The purpose of remembering the rishi along with the mantra and devata is to connect the entire range of consciousness with the individual consciousness, to plug into the consciousness of that rishi, to connect my consciousness directly with the symbolic consciousness.

Is it possible to record the experiences of the unconscious?

It is very difficult to record the experiences of the unconscious after coming back to consciousness. In the beginning it is very difficult even to have any experiences during the state of unconsciousness. Gradually, when the unconscious begins to expand itself and comes nearer to the superconscious state, at that time certain experiences are there, but when you come down to normal consciousness, you do not exactly remember them. Sometimes something might happen that might be remembered. However, there comes a state when you are thoroughly purified. Then you can remember.

Is it possible for communication of the unconscious to take place between two individuals?

There is a way of communicating with the unconscious between two individuals, but so far as this problem is concerned, the unconscious of everyone is different. Although there is the possibility of communication, it

generally happens only if they have both attained the same height of psychic evolution.

Again there are other methods by which a thought can be communicated through the conscious state to the unconscious, and there are methods by which the unconscious thought or force can be communicated to the conscious mind. Supposing someone has attained the unconscious state. There is a method by which a force can be released through him to your conscious mind. There is also a method by which something can be released from a conscious person and put into your unconscious, although you are conscious. In order to communicate through the unconscious state depends entirely on the level of the individual. If you have a guru, that is a different thing.



17

Samadhi and Psychic Breathing

9 August 1967

Is the state of samadhi a higher stage of the unconscious?

It is when the individual self passes through the phases of the unconscious and is about to enter into the superconscious (just before the threshold is crossed) that the state of samadhi dawns. Therefore, samadhi arises in the final phase of the unconscious and unfolds in the superconscious.

Can the experience of samadhi be brought to the conscious plane?

No. When one has the experience of superconsciousness, then one is able to know that experience, but unable to recall what kind of experience it was and what kind of feeling it was. In the Upanishads and in many other books, it is said that the experience of samadhi is beyond all explanations. For that reason, it is very difficult for the great men to say anything about samadhi, because they do not know how to express it and they also do not know what to express.

It is something like a dumb man taking sweets and not being able to explain the sweetness to others, although he has experienced the sweet taste. In the same manner, the experience of samadhi is not communicable by speech or any other physical signs. That is the ultimate conclusion.

Does the conscious mind remember that he had the experience of samadhi?

Yes, he knows that he had some sort of experience.

Does it mean that the experience of samadhi is beyond the expression of symbols, language, etc. So it must be in some new dimension, beyond the knowledge of our senses of perception?

Yes, samadhi is an experience of a state, where the awareness does not penetrate the conscious, the sub-conscious or the unconscious. The consciousness does not go to the physical, astral or causal dimensions. Therefore, a complete revision or revival of the personality takes place. One is unable to say anything about it, but the effects of samadhi are there.

It is something like a sleeping man who is just given a hypnotic pill without him knowing it. He has certain experiences and when he comes back to normal consciousness he does not know what experiences he had. He has a hangover, but he does not remember that he was given a pill. In the same manner, when one has the experience of samadhi, one does not experience that through any physical medium, neither the senses nor the mind. It is an experience beyond the subjective and objective tracts. Well, this is a very philosophical explanation on the basis of the Upanishads, but actually the experience is inexpressible. When you have it, then you will know.

In pranayama we have the psychic breath. Is there any such thing as the spiritual breath?

Spiritual breath is a kind of transcendental experience, like kevala kumbhaka, which occurs spontaneously when one enters the state of samadhi. Psychic breath is a kind of experience and in the same manner spiritual breath is a kind of experience, and it is a higher experience.

What is the relation between the physical and the psychic breath?

The physical breath is the breath we take in through the nostrils. The psychic breath is the subtle breath moving with the consciousness along a particular pathway or route in the physical body and in this way passing the entire psychic energy through it. Suppose I am breathing in a particular part of my body (hands, feet or any part), it means that the psychic energy is being channelled in that part.

The physical breath is the basis for the psychic breath. Suppose you want to pass the psychic breath through your hand. You have to do it with the help of ujjayi pranayama. The whole breath is circulated from mooladhara to ajna and from ajna to mooladhara. It is not just the physical prana, it is the subtle force. I mean it is the mind; it is the prana that goes up and down with the breath.

As a matter of fact, breathing takes place throughout the whole body, not only in the lungs, but how are you going to force your psychic energy to penetrate different parts of the body? The more knowledge you have of the body, the better the penetration can be.

Does it also depend on imagination?

Yes, but sensitive imagination.

Is imagination true?

You can say that imagination is not true, but in my opinion, imagination is a form of life which takes place in the mind. Imagination is not false; it is a kind of thinking. It is a thought force. If I imagine a man with nine hands, it is true that the man does not exist outside, but whatever I imagine, the stuff responsible for imagination is in the mind.

I can imagine it is raining when it is not raining.

Yes, but when you imagine it is raining, a particular psychic energy is being activated, a particular area is being tackled. In relation with the breath, supposing I imagine I am

breathing, upwards and downwards. It is true that it is just imagination, therefore, the breath is actually not moving up and down, but along with that, it is also true that something is moving up and down. What is that?

That is called psychic breathing. The basis is imaginary. The passage of the breath is imaginary, but the psychic breathing is not. It is consciousness plus a certain energy being synchronized with your natural rhythm of breathing. When these three things: consciousness, energy and imagination are synchronized, it is psychic breathing. You know clearly that your mind is going up and down in a particular passage and along with this, contraction and expansion of energy takes place in the system. That is one of the processes of healing.

The most difficult thing in this practice is breathing through a particular point. You will have to breathe there itself. Suppose I give you a good blow which causes pain. It is a throbbing pain which goes up and down in a particular area. Now close your eyes and breathe with that up and down pulsation of pain.

What exactly is meant by prana here?

Prana does not mean breath. Prana is a certain kind of energy which is responsible for life. In the Upanishads, *prana* is said to be the energy behind all movement. This is one of the principles of psychic breathing. However, you have to complete the circuit with consciousness because prana does not rotate unless the circuit is complete, like electricity. Now, inhale and take the prana to the affected part, mentally expanding it. Then exhale and contract it, imagining that the pain is being exhaled.

How does this breathing up and down the psychic passage and to any part of the body help in healing?

I will not explain it to you now, because if I do, then the practice will only have a logical importance and it will not help you. I do not want you to think or to know how this

practice works at the present time. Perhaps you want to find a number of explanations about the practice, but none of them will be true, because it has not been said in any of the books.

Ultimately will you tell us?

I may tell you and I may not, because the ultimate purpose is the practical awakening, but if you want to know how psychic rotation in different parts of the body helps, leaving aside ajapa japa and kriya, it is due to the psychic energy which is sent to the affected part of your body. Since prana has the power of healing, as it is life force, it heals or rather it speeds up the healing process. Also when the psychic rotation is done, certain centres in the brain become less sensitive and then the man feels less pain. Prana absorbs most of the pain and the remaining pain is felt to be much less.

Then this pain which is absorbed by prana is neutralized or balanced?

No, because the pain which is absorbed is always psychic or mental. About 50 to 75 percent of the pain which we have in the physical body is mental and can be reduced by this psychic method, then the healing process becomes quicker.

What is meant by ‘psychic’ and what is the psyche?

The word psychic is used in many ways. The psychic plane is above the mind and below the *atma*, the Supreme Self. Academically, the term psychic or psyche is used in Vedanta for *jivatma*, the Supreme Soul mingled with the karma or samskara. You can say Brahman plus avidya equals psyche; psyche minus avidya equals Brahman. I always use the psychic in that sense. In psychic breathing it is a force. It is circulation, rotation and movement of individual awareness. Psychic healing is easy to understand, but difficult to practise. When you inhale there is expansion and when you exhale there is contraction.

Should we do psychic breathing with breath retention?

In psychic breathing there is no breath retention. If you hold the breath in between, after four or five rounds you will feel suffocated and the flow of awareness is interrupted. In order to maintain the flow of awareness, you must always synchronize the movement of consciousness with the physical breath. Without the base of physical breathing, you can go up and down for a few rounds but not for long.

If psychic breathing is done correctly, does one have the feeling of intoxication?

It depends upon the physical condition. If the body is full of toxins, one may have a different type of intoxication. I mean the intoxication we have after a full meal and so on.

Can intoxication as from alcohol, etc., also be experienced?

Then it is a state of stimulation. I can only tell you what I have experienced. After psychic breathing is practiced you feel weightless. For a moment you feel that you do not have any fat at all. The lightness of the body is very prominent.

What is the difference between prana and atman?

Atman is a spiritual force; prana is a physical force.

In ujjayi, when we join prana with apana and apana with prana, what kind of phenomenon is that?

As far as this practice is concerned, please do not ask me to tell you everything. I will never tell you everything. I am sorry, but I feel that if we want success in this or in any spiritual practice, the first point is not to have an intellectual analysis, screening or explanation. This will bring the sadhana down from the intuitive level to the intellectual level.

Therefore, whatever sadhana you have to do for your personality elevation, it is better if nothing is studied about it. I hold this view very firmly. These things should only be

done on practical grounds; not on an intellectual level. Kriya yoga is absolutely psycho-physical, mental action. It is devoid of all intellect. In kriya yoga intellectual analysis is supposed to be the greatest barrier and the first enemy.

The reason why intellectual analysis is not able to bring spiritual progress is because we have developed ourselves intellectually to a great extent. However, when those who are innocent and know very little take up the practices, then progress is very rapidly.

Has Paramahansa Yogananda written a chapter in his book on kriya yoga?

Paramahansa Yogananda has not written any book about kriya yoga, but he used to teach certain practices which were preliminary to kriya yoga, just as we teach ajapa japā. He was teaching these practices at a time when precautions were necessary. So, with these precautions no harm is done; you can teach each and everyone.

Earlier I used to move throughout India. I used to talk about kriya yoga, but I did not teach anyone because I did not have any facilities. I only started teaching it from 1964. Since then I have initiated not more than 150 people and all of them have been very sincere.



18

Japa with a Mala

Class lecture, 10 August 1967

I wish to deal with an important aspect of japa yoga – that is the handling of the mala. Many people think that it matters little whether you hold the mala with the left hand or with the right; the mala can be held in any way because it is God's name that is recited. However, this is not correct. Although in some cases you do repeat the name of the Lord, here we are simply discussing mantra japa, not a religious practice. According to yoga the purpose of practising japa with the mala is for awakening the psychic awareness in an average individual.

Of course, for those who are reciting the Lord's name only, there is no rule regarding the use of the mala whatsoever. They may hold the mala in any way. They may practise with 101 beads, 2,001 beads or with 50 beads, as they like, but if you are practising japa for the awakening of awareness, which is the purpose of yoga, then you have to observe certain restrictions and follow certain methods in order to impress or influence the psychic structure.

Why we use a mala

Many people would like to know why it is necessary to use a mala at all. Even if japa is a practice for developing the psychic awareness, it could be done without the mala. The

use of a mala does not awaken the psychic awareness, so why should you use it? Psychic awareness is something quite different from the mala and that can be awakened even if you have no mala, I quite agree. The trouble is with the human psyche which doesn't remain steady for very long.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to choose some medium or basis through which you can know where you blinked or where you missed. In order to introduce a system for checking and detecting those moments when the mind becomes absent, and also to know your own progress, the method of japa with a mala was devised.

At a certain stage of japa, when your mind becomes quite calm and serene, there dawns a state in which the fingers can remain inert, as if momentarily paralyzed. You are quiet and you forget about yourself. Sometimes the mala also falls down and you know that you have missed the connection. If you are not turning the mala when that state arrives, how will you know it? You will be under the impression that you have experienced a high spiritual state when actually you have entered laya.

One evening that happened to me. At six o'clock I sat in padmasana for meditation. Within a few moments I lost consciousness and remained inert in the position until four o'clock the next morning. When I got up I was very pleased with my achievement except that I had a terrible pain in my knees and thighs. I went directly to my guru and said, "Swamiji, I just sat for ten hours in samadhi." He laughed and said, "That is very nice", but he did not encourage me.

Later on Swamiji asked me if I practised japa and if I had a mala. I said, "No." He asked, "What happened to the mala that I gave you?" I said, "Well, I don't really believe in malas." He replied, "You may believe or not, that is an intellectual matter, but it is not a question of belief, it is a question of need; whether your wavering mind, your wavering psyche needs it or not. That night when you sat for ten hours, are you sure your awareness was intact or did it go blank?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "There must be

some method to check that, to know that, to detect that.” I asked, “What method could be used because at that depth of consciousness it is not possible to remember anything?” He replied, “It is the continuity of japa with mala that will tell you that; all throughout the practice this finger and this finger were moving, so your consciousness was intact.”

Therefore, it is said, “When the japa goes on correctly and concentration takes place, then the mala moves on and on.” I am not going into more details about this, I will only say one thing, that the mala may not be something which your mind can accept, but it is something which your mind requires.

The number of beads

For japa we always use a mala which has 108 beads. The number of beads requires some explanation. First of all I will tell you what I have heard and what I have read in the books. The number 108 was selected in the following way. Number one represents Supreme Consciousness; zero represents the cosmos, the entire galaxy of creation, and eight represents the eightfold aspects of physical nature, you may call it physics.

Then there are other thinkers who say that this figure is the sum total of mathematical additions in the word ‘Brahma’. According to Sanskrit, the word Brahma is composed of four syllables: Ba – 23, Ra – 27, Ha – 33, Ma – 25, and the sum total is 108. There are other scholars who believe that 108 was chosen because it represents the number of skulls on the garland of Kali. It means that 108 denotes 108 incarnations. There are many more explanations given in different books and in different religions.

The number of beads fixed for the mala is 108 and the final bead is called the sumeru. For the time being, the mala may be considered as the passage of consciousness and the sumeru as the bindu. These 108 beads are the centres or stations through which your consciousness goes hopping and jumping up to the bindu. From bindu it returns; it does not

cross bindu. When you reach this point, one rotation of the psychic passage is completed, then you just reverse the mala and continue. So the beads are never moved in a continuous circle. The circle is broken with each round.

This particular scheme was devised to bring about the revival of consciousness, so that it does not lose touch with the main theme. If the mind somehow becomes absent and you do not realize it at that point, then, when you have to reverse the mala and the whole process, you remember, "Oh yes, I have lost my awareness." Usually, when you start to turn the mala, you are all right up to ten beads. After ten beads the mind starts wavering and the fingers go on automatically. Then, when the last bead comes, the consciousness is forced to revive itself, otherwise there will be some mistake in the counting.

Moving the beads

In japa there is a particular way of moving the beads in which only three fingers are used: the thumb, third and fourth fingers. Separate the third and fourth fingers and place the mala between them. Then turn the beads using the thumb and third finger. It is very simple. You can practise with the mala held near the heart, but usually the mala becomes heavy. For those who are practising a number of malas, some support is required so that heaviness is not felt by the fingers. In this case, you do not support the mala with the opposite hand, you use a certain kind of cloth bag known as a *gomukhi*.

In order to practise japa with the mala for any length of time, the use of a gomukhi is recommended. A gomukhi is made out of cloth in the shape of a right angle. The hand goes inside and turns the mala which is supported by the lower part of the cloth. The gomukhi is very light and it makes the practise of japa easy. It is used by those who do anushthana, practising up to 50,000 or 60,000 repetitions a day. For them it is a must.

Changing the breath flow

For those who practise many malas daily, yoga is also a must. When you sit down and practise many rounds of japa, the flow of the nadi changes on account of certain alterations that take place in the body. Therefore, yoga is used to balance the flow of the nadi. When you practise japa the left nostril should always be flowing. If both nostrils are flowing it is all right, but the left nostril should flow predominantly. If the left nostril is closed and the right nostril is flowing, then you have to use a method for changing the flow of the nadi. This is the subject of swara yoga, the science of awakening psychic knowledge through breath consciousness. Before starting the practice of japa, if the right nostril is flowing and the left nostril is not, you can change the flow by placing the left hand under the right armpit for about fifteen minutes until the left nostril starts flowing.

Importance of solitude

If japa is practised incorrectly, it can have adverse effects on the psyche. First of all, the practice of japa should not be done in front of anybody, especially a non-practitioner. It is a different matter if five or ten people are sitting together in a room and all of them are practitioners; then it can be done. However, if one of your family members does not approve and you go on practising in front of him, it can be very disturbing both for you and for him.

Japa is not a practice which can be understood by intellectual people, therefore it should be practised in absolute seclusion. It is a natural law that when psychic acts are performed before others, they lose their power; therefore the rule has always been that japa should be done in absolute secrecy and not as a show. That is one common error in japa.

One guru, one mantra

Changing the mantra is the second error in japa. Supposing you asked for a mantra from me and you have been able to develop it up to a certain extent but not fully, because I could

not explain the entire practice to you. So, you find another person who is more capable of awakening that mantra and giving you more detailed instructions about it. You may seek his help, but you should not change the mantra. The moment you change the mantra you create confusion in your unconscious mind and, once created, that confusion can never be corrected. That is why there are strict instructions that you should never change your guru or your mantra. These two become symbols of your consciousness and any change in them denotes confusion.

Sometimes it happens that a mantra has been given to you, but you feel that another mantra would be more powerful and your mantra is less powerful. Some people feel this way and they subconsciously or unconsciously try to get another mantra. That should not be done. The mantra should be selected with utmost care, absolute faith and final decision. Faith must be there, but you have to tell your mind, “I am making a final decision and after that, even if I do not like this mantra, I am not going to change it.”

This is the most important point of error in japa and many people have been committing it. People change so many things; they change their sect, their community, their religion, but they do not know what they are changing. They are changing the entire structure of the unconscious mind and thereby creating a lot of confusion in their psyche, not only in this life, but hereafter also.

So, the mantra should not be changed. Whatever mantra you have, whether it is a Sanskrit mantra, a Latin mantra or any mantra, with or without meaning, please go on with it. If at all you want to understand a bit more about it or if you want something to be added to your practice, then you should go to that person who will help you to unfold your knowledge without changing the mantra. This is the second error in japa.

Do not overdo it

The third error which many people make is overdoing the practice. They are so enthusiastic about it and they think that

it is the easiest and best method for achieving self-realization, so they do thousands and thousands of repetitions daily til their mind ultimately breaks or becomes introverted and dull. Therefore, it is very important not to overdo the practice. You know very well that any medicine which is powerful should not be taken over the prescribed dose. In the same way, if you think that your mantra is powerful, you should not practise it indiscriminately. That is why on the day the guru gives initiation, he prescribes the maximum limit.

At the time of my initiation my guru told me to do five malas after leaving the bed, five malas when going to bed, five malas after lunch and five malas after dinner, but you know, five malas takes only three minutes for me. I was wondering why Swamiji had prescribed all these short practices. I thought I should practise for half an hour, one hour, two hours, three hours, but one thing he said, "Do not miss the practice even for one day and then I assure you something will happen."

So, I used to do the practice in the morning, after lunch, after dinner and when I went to bed. Now these twelve minutes out of twenty-four hours have trained my psyche, have set a particular rotation in movement, and I am so used to it that my twenty-four hours are timed to those particular moments; I cannot help it. This is called disciplining the psyche. In the same way, it is not the quantity, nor even the quality, but it is the regularity of practice that is most important in japa.

Those who seek quantity go on for many thousands of repetitions. I am not discouraging this, but often they become dull and introverted and sometimes an involuntary sense of fainting occurs and then they have to give up the practice. They will be sitting and the mind starts fainting. Why? This month and last month, between twelve and four, I was doing thousands of mantra repetitions and then I left it. Now, exactly during that period, my mind starts fainting. That becomes the condition of the nervous system. So it is said that you should try to train your nervous system

gradually. Overdoing in new enthusiasm is one of the errors in japa yoga.

Use of the mala

The mala which is meant for japa should never be worn or put around the neck. The mala for wearing and the mala for japa are two different malas. Do not lend anyone your mala. It is not at all necessary to wear the mala although wearing the mala is good, but lending the mala or borrowing a mala is not good. If one day you do not have a mala, you should start counting with the fingers.

According to the method of japa sadhana, especially in tantric sadhana, the moment one of the beads is broken, you are not allowed to use the mala. This has many references in tantra shastra. So they do not use the mala when one of the beads is broken. They say it has become useless. Then what do they do? They always have a spare mala with them and that mala is used. The other mala is disposed of. In India we dispose of the mala in the Ganga only. It is never thrown just anywhere.

Pronunciation of the mantra

Finally, those who want to practise japa with a specific purpose, should always take care of the pronunciation. The correct articulation of the mantra will be able to create the thought figures within yourself. Instead of reciting *Om Namah Shivaya*, if you say *Om Namay Shivaya* or *Om Namah Shivaye*, the sound changes and so the figures also must change. To ensure that the thought figures remain the same throughout, it is necessary that the articulation of the mantra should be correct.

Not only the grammatical articulation, but also the psychic articulation must be correct. In the Vedas there are two types of articulation which I am going to explain in a nutshell. In grammatical articulation, it is the accent which is important, and in psychic articulation, it is the pitch in relation to the chakra. So far as mantra is

concerned, the psychic articulation should be perfect. If only the grammatical articulation is correct, and the psychic articulation is not correct, they say the mantra will not produce the desired form and effect within. I will be able to tell you more about this psychic articulation at the end of your Sanskrit study, as this is something which should be learned and not just heard.

Therefore, those who want to pick up a mantra for japa from an inexperienced guru should be very careful about the selection. It is also said that mantras selected from a book or a scripture or any ancient text are as dangerous for the practitioner as a poisoned arrow for the body. Now I have practically concluded the topic of japa yoga except for writing down a few mantras for your information.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

With which hand should the mala be held?

From the point of view of the bodily structure, the left hand should not be used for certain psychic efforts, as that will have an adverse effect on the heart. Therefore, the right hand should be used for holding the mala.

How is mantra practised for the fulfilment of certain desires? Should the ishta mantra be used?

If you want to perform anushtana or a tantric rite for the purpose of fulfilling some desires, then your ishta mantra should not be done. Your ishta mantra and mala should be put aside. If you practise the anushtana yourself, another mantra is accepted temporarily and on the last day of the anushtana that mantra is withdrawn. After it is withdrawn, all the figures and effects of the mantra are also withdrawn and it leaves no trace on your unconscious mind.

Why is another mantra used in place of the ishta mantra?

The ishta mantra is something which creates figures in your subconscious mind. The other mantra, which is temporarily

adopted, is for achieving a particular end. So at the end of the anushthana you release it, clear your mind and again start your ishta mantra.

During anushthana sometimes my hand becomes tired and not at other times. Why is this?

If your hand is tired during anushthana, surely your left nadi is not flowing. You can check your breath and you will find the nadi is wrong. At the moment the nadi changes the fatigue goes away. You should keep a yoga danda for this purpose and you will find that you are able to do the practice better.

What is the reason for not wearing the japa mala?

The mala used for japa should not be worn because you have charged it with a particular power, energy and aura, and that keeps on changing when you put it on your body. You change your clothes every now and then; you change your personality every now and then. So the mala must be kept separately and the moment you take it in your hand, the energy is there, the smell is there, the astral existence is there, and these will have an immediate effect on the mind.

However, in tantra shastra the wearing of a particular mala during anushthana is prescribed. Unless that particular mala and cloth are there, you cannot perform anushthana, but japa yoga, which is a part of bhakti yoga, is not done in this way, so it is not at all required to wear the mala.

Are the more costly malas better for japa?

Do not have costly malas. Tulsi and sandalwood malas are supposed to be the best and the cheapest.

What should we do if the mala thread breaks?

When the thread is broken you can repair the mala with a new thread which, according to tantric tradition, should always be silk and never silver, gold or copper.

Why is introversion considered to be an error in japa?

There are different stages of introversion in the realm of psychic consciousness. When you become too introverted the intellect becomes weak in its functions and that is called an error in the personality. You can find such introverts everywhere in the world. They are called psychotics. It means that not only the mind, but also the intellect is drawn inside and if anything is happening outside, they do not know. That is an error.

However, there is another type of introversion and that is called spiritual introversion. In that condition the mind goes inside and becomes one with the inner object without destroying the structure, without interfering with the activities of the intellectual process. That happens if the whole spiritual process is gradually increased, if you increase your practice of japa, not over enthusiastically but systematically and gradually, once in a year or twice in a year. Of course, on particular occasions you may practise more japa, i.e. during an anushtana, then that will do you good rather than harm.

So, there are two types of introversion, one is psychic and the other is spiritual. When the intellect goes in, one absolutely loses the sense of vigilance. There are four faculties, four aspects of individual consciousness: the thinking mind, the reasoning mind, the aware mind and the feeling mind. When these four become withdrawn, the personality becomes unbalanced and japa should not be practised.

How does the mala help to keep the awareness?

The inner awareness is in tune with the movement of the beads in japa. The rotation of the mala is continued with the help of the inner awareness and the moment the inner awareness goes blank, the mala falls. If the mala falls there is a break in the ceaseless flow of your awareness. Either the awareness has gone on a different route altogether or it has lost its track. If the mala falls, it is not a good sign

because it means we have forgotten everything; the mind is suspended.

Is the state of forgetfulness devoid of inner awareness?

There is a state of total forgetfulness devoid of inner awareness and there is a state of total forgetfulness with awareness. From the very beginning, I have been stressing a very subtle point and that is the inner awareness. That inner awareness cannot be explained in terms of this outer awareness. So, forgetfulness of everything else with inner awareness intact is one state of individual consciousness. The other state is forgetfulness in totality where no inner awareness takes place and then the mala falls. When there is forgetfulness inside and outside the mala falls. However, if you have forgotten everything outside, but the inner awareness is there, rotation of the mala will always continue.



19

Japa Yoga

12 August 1967

Now we are going to conclude the topic of japa and from tomorrow I intend to take up the subject of prana vidya – meditation on psychic breathing. One thing remains to be taught and that is the mantras. There are so many mantras that it is definitely not possible to tell everything about it now. However, I will write some of the mantras on the blackboard so that you can record them. Before that, if you have anything to ask in order to clarify some doubts regarding japa, please do it.

Yesterday you explained why the japa mala should not be worn. Is it possible to use a mala which you have worn for japa if you stop wearing it?

The mala which is used for wearing should only be used for that purpose. That in itself is very effective, because once you wear it for a number of days, it acquires power and at the time of doing japa it helps you through those psychic or spiritual vibrations. So, you should have a separate mala for japa. The mala which you are wearing can be worn at all times, before japa, during japa and after japa.

Does that also apply from the point of view of bhakti yoga?

As far as the simplest bhakti yoga is concerned, the mala which is used for japa can also be worn and the mala which is worn

can be used for japa, but when you take into account the psychic background of the practice, then there are many things which have to be done properly. In bhakti yoga you can do japa with any mala. After all, God doesn't make any differentiation between this mala and that mala, but when you take into account the psychic things, the subtle things, about which yogis and practitioners are very careful, from that point of view, I think the mala which is worn should be used only for wearing and the mala used for japa practice should be used only for japa.

Can you explain what you mean by psychic background?

It will not be possible for me to tell you exactly what I mean here, but when you practise japa, there are two backgrounds. One is the background of a bhakta or devotee, who just does the practice, thinking that he is remembering God's name and God will fulfil his wishes or that it is his duty to remember God's name. The second background is that of the yogi, who may or may not have that much faith in God, but knows that, by doing japa, the consciousness becomes subtler and subtler, and ultimately it loses touch with his normal consciousness and becomes introverted. That is the psychic approach to japa and the first one is the devotional approach.

In class you said that we should practise japa every day for a limited period of time. Does this apply to everyone?

During a general class when I tell you to practise japa for half an hour, one hour or three hours, it does not always mean that you personally should do it. Also, remember that, so far as anushthana is concerned, two hours, three hours, four hours, five hours of japa can be done, but when you are doing japa as a part of your daily routine, five minutes in the morning and five minutes at night is enough. Three hours of japa is only meant to be done during anushthana.

Why is the mala held close to the heart?

So that you may practise japa and at the same time keep your consciousness concentrated in the region of *anahata*,

the heart chakra. It will take less effort. If you are supposed to meditate on bhrumadhya and do japa at the heart, you will find it difficult to be aware simultaneously of bhrumadhya and the mala side by side. Gradually, after some time, you will find that the difference between the japa mala and the region of the heart is completely lost. They become one.

Should we practice ajapa if we are going to do kriya yoga? Can we use our own mantra in the practice of ajapa or is it better to use Soham’?

Ajapa japa is an excellent preparation for kriya yoga, but after you begin to practise kriya yoga, then you should not practise ajapa japa. You should do simple japa plus kriya yoga. Those who are not going to practise kriya yoga, only ajapa japa, can use their own mantra instead of *Soham*.

Is it true that there are certain mantras which are not to be used for chanting or repetition?

Yes. Almost all the mantras in japa yoga should be repeated, but there is one kind of mantra which should only be written and should never be chanted or read. However, that type of mantra is part of tantra shastra and I am will tell you about that when the topic is due.

Is it better not to use the mala when you are outside in a social situation?

Yes, it is better. Whenever you are in a particular society or situation where it is not possible for you to take out your mala without making a show, please don't do it. Just close your eyes, introvert your mind and start doing japa mentally, instead of counting on the mala. You see, it all depends on the atmosphere, but the rule is that your spiritual practices, including japa, should not be made known to other people. If they are made known, they will lose their value.

Shouldn't we tell people anything about our practices?

No. People should not even know that you are a spiritual aspirant. They should just think that you are a worldly man. Of course, if they are spiritual seekers, like the people here, that is a different matter. Then you should show your true colours.

Which type of japa is most effective?

The mental japa is most beneficial. Swami Sivananda has written in his books that mental japa is one thousand times more effective than the other types of japa.

Is it necessary to count the number of repetitions in mental japa?

Of course, you have to count. We are only discussing about japa in an emergency, which is an exception and not the general rule. If you can count on a mala, well and good. If you can't, please don't, but whenever it is possible, please count and be aware of the counting.

Why do the people who practise japa for long periods of time sometimes become abnormal?

Yes see, when people with suppressed emotions, passions, unfulfilled desires, anger, and greed try japa for prolonged periods, what usually happens is that their consciousness withdraws and then they become introverted in an abnormal way. However, those who practise japa with a mind free from suppressions due to proper sublimation and expression, are always spiritually conscious within.

I am not saying that you must be free from anger, lust, greed, etc., but your life should be adjusted in such a way that things are not suppressed. Either you must express or you must sublimate. Suppose there is so much greed in you that you have to suppress it because of your society, because of your mental weakness. Usually at that time, a knot is formed in the mind due to your *vasanas*, your hidden desires. As a result of that there is a conflict within, and that inner conflict brings about an abnormal state of introversion.

Hence, in the higher part of yoga it is said that one should not have passion, greed, desire and anger. One should be free from the effects of these emotions. There should not be any conflicts between the conscious and the subconscious mind. Everything should be clear. As a result of that, those who have led a well-adjusted life succeed very well in japa. Those who have money, children and family make quick progress when they take to the spiritual practices.

Why is their progress so quick?

Because their suppressions are released, so their toxic accumulations, their psychic toxins, are much less than those who have not led the complete life that the worldly man is demanded to lead. Of course, I am speaking about the normal man, not about such great souls as Ramana Maharshi or Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Please don't take these people into account.

Usually what happens when the desires have not been fulfilled is that there is a diversion of consciousness within. As a result of that, when the mind goes within, it loses the track; it goes off the spiritual path. So, in the scriptures it is said, if you want to lead a spiritual life, you must see that all your desires are fulfilled, or if your desires are not all fulfilled then you must adjust your life in such a manner that they will not be suppressed.

For that, there are many rules. For householders, family obligations, children, work, money and status; all these things come in order to exhaust the emotions and the desires. After forty-five, when they have enjoyed everything in life, they can take to spiritual life, then the question of suppression does not arise, but if those who have not married try to get into spiritual life, they will find the code of action is very different.

Those who have never married are called brahmacharis. What should they do, what should they not do and what work can they take up? A lot of rules have been laid down for them. As a result of that, suppression does not take place. Their nervous energy has to be properly channelled and duly exhausted.

Therefore, according to tradition, women were not given sannyasa, because they tend to have more suppressions, more greed, jealousy, etc. That is their nature. Of course, there are exceptions.

Do you think that a person over forty is more suitable for sadhana than a young person for this reason?

Well, that is what I have understood. If a person in his forties or fifties has been leading a family life, he should be more calm and quiet than the young people.

Today most people of that age have no interest in spiritual life. They are still restless and full of desires.

The difficulty with those people is that they don't have any spiritual motivation or spiritual background. After leading a family life, if one gets into a spiritual training, if one gets in touch with the spiritual life, then the restlessness, the discontentment, can be avoided.

Is it like that in India also?

Yes and no. Here, people are unable to change their way of thinking. From the very beginning they have been brought up in that atmosphere. They have been trained to think in a particular way. So, at the age of forty or fifty they will feel that it is their duty to take to spiritual life.

In the West that is not what we see.

That is not what we see because there the society is not able to help the individual in his spiritual march. The individual must be taught either through schools, parents, books or religion. Somebody must tell him, "Look here, enjoy life. Let your children grow up. Then at the age of forty or fifty, change your thinking and turn towards the spiritual life."

What is the difference between yoga and religion?

Religion is not different from yoga. Yoga contains all that is said in religion and religion contains all that is said in yoga,

but there is one difference – yoga is secular in approach while religion is not. What is said in religion is also said in yoga and what is written in yoga is also said in religion. There is absolutely no difference between them. Religion is accepted by those people who believe in God, but there are people in the world who do not want to believe in God, or who want to believe in God but not as a bhakta. Those people take to yoga. One should not see any difference in this, but yoga should be left absolutely free from any religious touch. This is what I believe.

Can young people who have a spiritual outlook live a normal life without coming into conflict?

Yes, it is possible. If the young person has developed a spiritual outlook on life, which one is supposed to have by the age of forty to forty-five, and if I tell him, “You please continue the normal life of a householder, doing your duties, earning money, helping people and thus suffering a bit in the day to day routine life”, then the aspirant will have to ask himself the question, “Does the restlessness, the exhaustion, and the mental and psychic panic caused by the day to day activities of life, interfere with the spiritual progress of man?”

In addition to this, the master or the guru has to teach him one more practice, one more important attitude has to be developed and that is known as detachment. In Sanskrit it is called anashakti. That is the proper word for it. The point is that I am a spirituality-minded person. I have a family and children. I have so much trouble and so much happiness. I have pleasure and pain from moment to moment. I am stuck. A shock is given – pleasure. Another shock is given – pain. Sometimes my wife and children behave according to my wishes and sometimes they go against them.

At that time, a particular attitude has to be developed side by side with your asana, pranayama and meditation, and that is called anashakti. *Anashakti* means unaffectedness. It is the correct attitude because if life has given you a shock and you are affected, then you will not improve. Indifference is

something else. Supposing you are my eldest son and you don't care for me. Should I be indifferent? No, I must try to improve your attitude, but you don't care for it. Still I try to improve you. Yet, if I am unsuccessful, my mind will remain calm and quiet.

You must try to be a witness of all that is happening in life, but at the same time, you must try to correct the wrongs that are taking place. The inner soul, the inner life, the life which is meant for spiritual evolution, should be free from effects. That is the kind of attitude that you have to develop. But how? Through constant discrimination. You can do it. You will find it is possible.

Please speak about the different mantras and their use.

Gayatri is an important mantra and you have different *Gayatris* for different deities, for different symbols. There are *Gayatri* mantras for Ganesha, Brahma, Vishnu, Narasimha, Garuda, Rudra, Nandikeshwar, Shanmukha, Surya, Durga, Rama, Hanuman, Krishna, Gopal, Parasurama, Dakshinamurti, Guru, Hansa, Hayagriva, Tantrika Brahma, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Shakti, Annapurna, Kalika. According to the Upanishads there are thirty-four *Gayatris* altogether and a complete reference to these can be found in the Narayana Upanishad.

Then there are those mantras recited by aspirants for the fulfilment of specific desires. I will not be able to tell you about that because I myself know very little. For the sake of reference, I can tell you one such mantra for removing the sting of a scorpion bite. By reciting that mantra, the scorpion poison can be removed from the body. I can tell you that mantra; other mantras I do not know. It is said that those mantras are known to tantric experts and they should be used only by those who are deserving. The study of those mantras is prohibited. I do not know them and even if I did, I would not be in a position to tell anything about that.

Now we come to the japa mantra. There are many mantras used for japa, for concentration, for rotation of

consciousness, for awakening the psychic awareness. Every mantra has a bija mantra. I hope you remember what I told you about this. Bija mantra is the first syllable that appeared in the deep, unconscious mind, in deep meditation. In that state of meditation the rishi first heard the bija and then the bija was developed into mantra.

Bija mantra	Devi or devata
<i>Aum</i>	The Cosmic Being
<i>Hroum</i>	Shiva
<i>Dum</i>	Durga
<i>Kreem</i>	Kalika
<i>Hreem</i>	Mahamaya
<i>Shreem</i>	Lakshmi
<i>Aim</i>	Saraswati
<i>Kleem</i>	Krishna
<i>Hum</i>	Bhairava
<i>Gam</i>	Ganesha
<i>Glaum</i>	Ganesha
<i>Kshroum</i>	Narasimha

That is all the bija mantras. In addition there are some others which come from tantric texts, such as Sri Vidya, but these will not be explained here.

It has always been said that the use of mantra without bija mantra will not be effective. Suppose you are using Ganesha mantra, so along with that mantra you add the bija mantra *Om Gam*. Or you are using the mantra for Shiva, so you will have to add *Om Hroum*. Practising mantra without a bija mantra is like shooting a rifle without a bullet. Then the mantra can be had from anyone, from anywhere, from any book. The bija mantra must be heard directly from the guru, this is the tradition.

Now we have finished our discussions on japa yoga. This is a very important subject, because when you take up tantra shastra, after a few months you will not understand anything unless you have studied japa yoga completely. So you must have a clear concept of japa yoga, then, when you start tantra shastra, you will understand everything.

20

Conclusion of Japa Yoga

Class Lecture, 13 August 1967

Of course, japa yoga is not a part of bhakti yoga, it is a part of tantra. There are many mantras. Mantras are the combination of so many sound waves or thought waves and every sound has its own form, which is something we intellectual people may never be able to understand. For example, the sound *ra* should not be mistaken for the Sanskrit 'ra' or the Urdu 're', or the English 'r'. Right from the very beginning we have learned certain sound forms for the convenience of language, but it is still to be established whether these forms are the actual sound.

Suppose a child or a baby is not taught any alphabet whatsoever; he is only taught the primitive sounds. When he is grown up he is asked to think about the waves of the sound, how does it feel to him? I think if he is keen and concentrated, it should come to him that the sound has a definite form. He can tell us that form and we will have to believe that.

You cannot believe me because I have certain forms already in my mind attributed to different sounds, according to my language. Supposing I am Muslim, there is a form attributed to 'p' in Urdu. In English, of course, you know it is 'p' and in Sanskrit it is i. Similarly it is something else in Chinese, in Japanese and in other languages.

We have no reason to doubt that the great men, orators or inventors of the ancient days did have the knowledge of the sound principle which they converted into particular forms. They gave each sound a form. At the same time, not all people throughout the world felt the necessity of rendering the sound into exact waves. They just thought, “Now, let us have a certain sign for the sound ‘p’”. Instead of having the sound ‘p’, now I tell you the sign for the sound of ‘p’. So these are the signs for sounds which people have invented for the convenience of language.

Apart from that, every sound has a form and that is called a *matra*. So, when we discuss the *matra*, please remember that we have to take into account every letter that the mantra has. For example, in the word ‘Narayana’, there are four letters. In Sanskrit we use the terms *akshara* and *varna*. *Akshara* means ‘that which does not perish’. So, the different letters or sounds are called *akshara*. *Varna* means ‘colour’ and each *akshara* has a different *varna*. Therefore, the word ‘Narayana’ has four *akshara* and four *varna*.

Every sound has a colour. Once a sound is produced, it is imperishable, it is not destroyed. It exists in its original form. You see, I have spoken so many sentences within the last half hour or so; I have released so many sound waves, sound forms. Once they have been released, they remain as sound vibrations. If I say “*vakratundaya*”, it will create certain forms.

Now please forget the word forms for the time being. Only take into consideration the sound and its colour, if it has one.

So, when the word ‘*vakratundaya*’ is released, it is immediately heard by you. Whatever you have heard, you accept it in the form of sound waves and then you will express it in the form of letters. If you know English, you will say ‘*vakratundaya*’. If you know Urdu, you will say something else. If you know nothing then you will be able to produce just the sound waves.

In addition to that, the sound waves that go into the brain are different because they are interpreted differently. The sound waves that go into the atmosphere are in the pure form. There they are immediately arranged into their own sets, and it is not possible for us to be able to catch the sound which was produced in the past without the help of a certain instrument.

I have spoken a particular word. If you have some instrument with you, after one or two years you will be able to pick up this travelling sound wave, which keeps on travelling into infinity until it gets mutilated. Up to one or two years you might be able to pick it up somewhere in a very much diminished state. There are certain sound waves in the cosmos, in the earth and outside the earth also. Sometimes we do pick up these sound waves coming from the earth and from the cosmos when we are in a deep state of cosmic telepathy. We are sitting and listening. Just a few sounds are coming from somewhere when our mind is in tune with a particular range accidentally.

It is not possible to get back every sound that has been released after two years, but according to scientific experiments there is a possibility of recording some of the old speeches or sermons made by great prophets in the past. Somewhere you can just pick it up and record it. So, they are working on the possibility of tracing the released sound.

Sound is given a form by people either for the purpose of occultism, as in tantra shastra, or in order to produce the language. Now, we come to this word 'Narayana'. It contains four aksharas or letters, and each akshara has a particular colour. For example, 'na' has a watery form and its colour is crystal, but it appears to be blue. 'Ra' has a fiery form and the colour is red; two colours are joined, crystal, appearing like blue with red.

In tantra shastra these colours are known as varna. The different letters of the alphabet – 'ka', 'kha', 'ga', 'gha', are not just letters, they are a garland of different colours. 'Ka'

has the colour of green. 'Kha' has no colour but appears blue. 'Ga' has a fast moving crystal colour. 'Gha' has a smoky colour, and 'gna' appears like a ray of light, thin and sharp. These are the forms attributed in the tantric signs; varna malas.

So in japa yoga, you should not try to go into the grammatical meaning of mantra in order to derive more benefit. As a matter of fact, when you go to study tantra, it will be taught that when you recite a mantra, you keep meditating on the colour: pink-red-blue, brown-blue-red, blue-brown-yellow. At the same time, the mantras also have rhythms. For example, 'ka' has length, 'kha' has length and thickness, 'ga' has more length and less thickness, 'gha' has more length and more thickness, 'gna' is a depressed point.

That is how the mantra has to be decided. Of course, the mantras do have literal meanings. Take, for example, *Ekadantaya Vidmahe*, the mantra for Ganesha. The word *eka* means 'one', *dantaya* means 'tooth' and *vidmahe* means 'knows', but from the point of tantra shastra, *eka* means a combination of colours or two sound waves brought together in order to release a particular psychic or mental force. I don't know how far I am clear to you, so for the time being one thing should become clear. Mantras as a whole do not belong to any tradition, they are just the flowers that we collect from the gardens.

21

Thought Transmission

13 August 1967

Do thoughts have waves or forms and can they all be transmitted?

As far as I have understood, not all thoughts have form, only strong thoughts have form. Most of the thoughts that come to the mind are just waves. If I think of you, wherever you may be, and if your thoughts become clear to me and what I said to you becomes clear to me, it means the thoughts have form. The transmission, the connection, has taken place. When I know that a person is conscious, at that time I only meditate on his figure or form, and also transmit thoughts as symbols, not in the form of regular thoughts.

So there are ranges of thoughts, enmity – anger, love – affection, and they have different symbols. According to some schools, the thought forms are decided by a numerical chart. However, the important thing to remember is that every man is connected with every other man. There is a complete connection amongst all of us, so the moment I think of you, you receive the waves. That is the main point.

What is the message, what is the thought?

That thought has to be sent in symbolic form and if that symbol is correct, then numerical deductions can be made.

Does it take place immediately?

Yes, in the subconscious mind.

Although the person may not be aware of the thoughts he has received, his subconscious will still receive them?

The thoughts are always received by the subconscious mind and understood by the conscious mind. Some understand the thoughts very clearly and others do not. There are many others who understand in dream. Supposing I send a particular thought and you are unable to receive it because of the structure of your psychic personality, then it will come to you as a dream.

Are dreams sometimes the result of transmitted thoughts?

Yes, they may be something like a gramophone record, recorded earlier and played later.

Suppose I want to send thought currents to Mr X. Is it better to send them while he is sleeping?

Usually, but if your thought is strong, then it doesn't matter.

Must the thoughts which are received always be in symbolic form?

Yes, that is the key. Form is the product of thought and vibration is also the product of thought. The difference is that thought is consolidated into form, but vibrations are not.

How is the thought received by a particular person?

Because it is directed to him, so he is made conscious of it. The thought goes out to someone and in between anyone can receive it, anyone can tap the telephone. However, a particular person receives it, because you want him to, you have given him the call to attention.

Thought waves are weaker than thought forms, if you send a thought wave rather than a thought form, will it reach the desired person?

Of course the vibrations reach, but if I am just thinking about you at any time and I have not created any symbol at all, the thought is just by the way, then I do not think it has been scientifically transmitted. Still, the person receives it. I have seen this in a number of cases. I sit down casually and think about something. I then come to know that the person I am thinking about is thinking the same thing. Within five minutes I come to know this.

This has happened, not only in my case, but with other people also. Even ordinary people receive casual thoughts. So, I think that maybe if two persons are alert and attentive to one another at the same time, the transmission is easier. If I am remembering you and you are remembering me, then even weaker thoughts are received. However, if I am not remembering you and I am just talking to a number of people, and you want to send a thought, then you need a strong current.

I'll tell you frankly, I have not been able to form any theory about what exactly is the process, but I can tell you what happens. In the dead of night, you think about a certain man. In the morning you send him a thought. He gets up and you go to him. He does not know what you sent. You are disappointed, but you do not say anything about it to him. You return and on the third day he comes and says, "Swamiji, I had a dream, and in the dream it said that I must do asanas in the early morning." It is the same thought which you sent. What is the special reason for this delay? It is a very complicated process and we need to do some research in order to understand it.

Again, while talking to you, I am thinking of a particular man. It comes to my mind that the hall must be locked, then immediately I find that man is going and locking it. Why was the thought received instantaneously although no attention call was given? Maybe the two minds were on the same level of consciousness, so that which struck me, struck him as well, but I don't know whether it struck him through my brain or it struck me through his brain.

You go to bed at night, but you do not sleep well. Thoughts come to you about a particular person and you know that the thoughts sent by you were received by that person. Then there are some wonderful things that happen. You think about Chidananda, that he should perform some asanas. There is another person with the same name, and he receives the thought. This particular phenomenon has come to my observation. So, I think that everybody must have different names and symbols.

Another thing that can happen is you send a particular thought to 'X' and at that moment he receives the opposite thought. I have also observed that a number of times. Suppose I am sending you a thought that you should not sleep in the afternoon unnecessarily. It comes to your mind instantaneously that it is good to sleep in the afternoon. This happens with most people. We are not aware of the secrets of the process and how it takes place. You send a symbol and the person receives the symbol, but he is unable to interpret it. That is also a possibility.

There is a person and I send him a particular thought with great force. Exactly at that time, that person is also sending currents of thought in the opposite direction. Then what happens? I am sending you a thought, "You should do this", and at the same time you are sending me a thought, "I should not do it". Then the first sender receives a mental disturbance; both thoughts come to him. Supposing I am asking you to take tea and you send the thought, "No, I should not take tea". These two thoughts come to me and create disturbance, and then tension develops in the centre of the brain.

Speaking very frankly, most of our actions, most of our personal ideas, most of our reactions, are not the product of our own thinking. They are the results of thought waves we have received and transmitted. You must have absolute psychic defence around your subconscious mind if you do not want the effects of others' thoughts.

As a matter of fact, I am only discussing the different things that can happen during thought transmission. If

you ask me how these things happen, as I have said from the beginning, I am not able to formulate a theory on it. Somehow or other it just happens. I have formulated a number of theories in my mind, but later, when I compare these with new experiences, I find they are wrong. I formulated a theory on etheric matter, then I formulated a theory on the subconscious mind, but both proved to be wrong. So there is some hidden law responsible for thought transmission.

I also tried sending the thoughts with a particular breath, but they were not received, then I tried sending with the wrong breath and they were received. I have found that there are certain thoughts which man does not receive and even if he does receive, he does not want to express. He retains these in his subconscious mind and does not want to bring them to his conscious mind.

It is very difficult for an ordinary man to know which particular thought has been transmitted to him and which his original thought is, but when one makes a special study of this science, gradually one comes to know what is the transmitted thought and what is the thought born of one's own samskara. I am sitting quietly in my easy chair. I am thinking about Mr X and I am sure that I am not thinking of anybody else, but suddenly a thought just drops in between and the thought of Mr X is gone. This means that the thought was transmitted from somewhere and received by me, but in the case of those people who have wavering minds, it is quite natural that the thoughts will be more widely fluctuating.

If someone is receptive and especially interested in analyzing this process, he knows when he receives a thought, but usually when I send a thought to a particular person, he does not know that the thought has been transmitted. He is just sitting and an idea comes to him that he should read the *Bhagavad Gita*. I have asked him to do that, but he thinks it his own samskara. He does not know who has sent the thought to him. Then, because he is in touch with me,

he comes and says, “Swamiji, an idea came to my mind that I must read the *Bhagavad Gita*.”

However, there are certain rules in thought transmission. You should not tell the person that you sent the thought, unless he is very close. I used to practise this with a disciple of mine. She knew it and I knew it. I was living at Munger at the time and she was living outside. I would send her a particular thought on a given day. I would write to her and ask what she had received that day. She would write it down and send it to me. The copy was with me and I used to keep a tally. We tried this for about three months and many of the thoughts were true transmissions.

During the experiment we also specified our ranges of thought. That has to be done in the beginning. We decided that the transmissions would be on kundalini yoga or hatha yoga. There are thousands of things to think about in hatha yoga, so every day I would send different thoughts on neti, dhauti, basti, and she would write them down along with the day and time that she received them. Sometimes, certain exceptions occurred where the thought received did not tally with the thought that was sent. It means that thought was false; it was her own creation and not a transmitted thought.

This is an example of how thought transmission can be programmed between two close individuals. However, you will find in other cases, it is always better not to tell the person that you are sending him thoughts.

Do thoughts smell?

I used to receive scents so often, but I never registered them as a form of thought. The smell of sandal is expected from a holy man. Astral beings have scent and when they come perfumes come in advance. Now, the question arises, if we receive a particular smell, sandal or rose, does it mean the thought associated with that must be of a psychic nature? There are many psychic people in India, mainly ladies, ordinary ladies, and when some death is going to take place

in their families, they begin to smell it long in advance. They receive the foul smell of a dead body being burnt. This is a very frequent experience.

Do you think it is possible to materialize the body in different places?

I have experienced, not once or twice, but many times that one's body can be materialized as it is, in a number of places, and I find that there is no better spiritual attainment than this, so far as the good of humanity is concerned. One's body can be materialized in the same dimension, with the same stuff of intelligence. Just as I can permute and combine thoughts, the materialized body is exactly the same. You can say the second Swami Satyananda, third Swami Satyananda, and so on.

This took place when I was in Gangotri for nine months in 1945–46, doing pranayama. I had no work, no worries, no preoccupations, nothing of that sort. At that time, whenever I thought clearly about a particular place or person, my body would materialize there and that person would meet me, exactly as I am. Such people would not be ready to believe that I was in Gangotri at that time, and I also did not tell them, because this has to be kept secret.

However, for the last twenty years I have been thinking about this very seriously and one constant thought comes to my mind. I do not think that materialization is a very difficult thing, but it requires complete detachment from all so-called activities and karma. So I am thinking of making an experiment on myself. That is why by the end of 1968 I am retiring completely from active thinking in life. I am going to try and I hope that I will succeed.

So we can see you in Bombay in your materialized body?

I will come to you, I am sure. I cannot define the laws, but I think it is possible. This is not a psychic phenomenon; it is an actual thing and it is not a subjective experience, but an objective one, something in front of you. How can you deny

it? It is materialization. According to the efficiency of one's practice, one can materialize in a number of places at the same time, sometimes in America, France or anywhere, and all can see. This is the last experiment of my life.

Will it be a hallucinated type of phenomenon?

If you give me four chappatis you will not get them back.

We heard of similar cases. Some persons used to come and talk or eat, then disappear. What is this phenomenon?

I am unable to say in detail, because I do not know exactly what will happen in the process of withdrawal. Whether I will immediately disappear from your room in the morning or you will put me in the train, etc., I do not know. This is one of the greatest experiments in yoga. This body will be in Munger and nobody will approach it except my disciple.

What about your disciple?

A disciple has got to be the medium. Without such a disciple, one cannot go ahead. Guru is powerless without a disciple. All these kriyas are better done through a disciple, never directly. Otherwise, they create so much heat and tension. The disciple is the best medium.

Then will you come back again to the active field as a world personality?

No, with that I will end my life. Nobody can expect me back after 1968. After that I do not want to work. I have my underground room made and I will remain there, that is all. That is the only plan I have and no other plan. I am not interested in reading books or newspapers. I just want to remain in my underground room.*

* An underground room was made and Swamiji lived there in complete seclusion for nine months, after which he had to abandon the sadhana due to the pleas and requests of friends and disciples.

You are so young, so useful and so kind.

Yes, it is true. I understand your point, but you see, if the thing which is in my mind happens, it will be something wonderful for mankind.

How do you withdraw your projected body?

I do not know. I am aware of this dimension because of some experiences which came under my observation during my stay at Gangotri. Since then I have been thinking about it and I have tried to work it out a number of times. I wanted to go into seclusion and I went from Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh to Uttarkashi for this purpose. However I found it very difficult, because in order to conduct this experiment, the help of a very obedient disciple with no personality of his own, so far as guru is concerned, is required. By obedient, I do not mean consciously obedient, but subconsciously obedient, obedient in dreams, in meditation, in sleep, even in deep trance. Every part of the disciple's being should obey the guru. This is not the ordinary obedience which we understand. I must be able to guide the disciple's dream, psyche and intellectual movement.

Such a good disciple is required, and in those days, when I went into seclusion, I did not have any disciple. I did not even have any mission. So it would come to my mind, "Why should I do it? What is the purpose of materializing my body at a number of places?" Now I am clear in my mind about it and I know I can be of greater help to the people. So, I have formulated a definite plan and I am going to begin next year.

Is materialization something we can objectify, can we photograph it with a camera?

I do not know. I only know that materialization can happen because of some of my experiences. You see, in 1963, when Swami Sivananda left his body, I went to Rishikesh and then I came back to Munger. One night, while I was asleep at Ananda Bhavan, I found that my room was open and the tall

figure of Swamiji came there in flesh and blood. There was no doubt about it. Of course, by then I was wide awake, and Swamiji began to speak to me in Tamil, not in English. He said, "What program have you decided upon for yourself?" I told him, "Swamiji, I have no program at all." He said, "Why don't you light a lamp and carry on the work according to the plan we made in 1943?"

In 1963, the foundation of the Sivananda Ashram was laid for only one purpose. It was the blueprint, the master plan to prepare teachers of different nationalities to be experts in yoga, not just disciples. He wanted them all to be able to deal with every aspect of yoga thoroughly, but what happened was that he had many disciples and no experts. There were many reasons for this. Swami Sivananda did not have much money and he was faced with many difficulties. So, he said to me, "Why don't you continue the work according to our plan?" I said, "Yes, if that is your wish, I will do it."

The second thing he said was, "You do not have to take charge of Rishikesh Ashram", because some prominent disciples like Swami Chidananda and others had been called and asked that somebody should take charge in place of Swamiji. So, similarly a letter had come to me. Of course, it was very clear in my mind that I would not take up that work; it was all a great headache. Swamiji said to me, "No, you need not go to Rishikesh; you will remain here." Until then, there was nothing in my mind about this school. That happened in 1963, in the month of August, when I returned from Rishikesh after attending Swamiji's samadhi ceremony.

The next day I had to go to Bhagalpur. After seven or eight days I returned, and our secretary, K.K. Goenka, came to receive me at Jamalpur. On the way he asked me, "What are your plans?" Again he repeated the question, "What are your plans?" I said, "I have no plans, but I feel I must stay somewhere in one place. I cannot keep moving." Then he asked, "Why don't you stay in Munger?" I replied, "Actually, if I get a place, I will." He said, "Ananda Bhavan is your place", but I said, "No that is a palatial building. I want a

simple hut for myself where I can house the lamp, that is all. I have no other ambition.” He said, “In that case you can do many things.” I said, “But money is a great problem.” He said, “Do not worry about it, money will come. We will give something, others will give something.”

So, we drove to Munger. He took me to a place six miles from here where they owned a large property with several buildings on it, but that place was too far away from the town, railway station, police station and other amenities, so I said, “No.” Ultimately they offered me this piece of land and I said, “All right, I will take it.” Then I left for Bombay to collect some money. To tell you quite frankly, I left empty handed and I returned with trunks of things: vessels, plates, bedding, pillows, blankets, files, a few thousand rupees as well.

While I was away, Mr Goenka had taken a great interest. When I returned the great hall was ready. On 19th January 1964, we had the opening ceremony of this school and since then things have been developing very rapidly.

All this started happening after my meeting with Swamiji. However, I mean to say that I knew this was not Swamiji’s physical form. I knew that he was dead, that he was no more on this earthly plane. I saw him as a higher reality. The physical body is a lower reality; that spiritual manifestation is a higher reality. You cannot say that this body is more real than that materialized body, rather that is more real than this. By spiritual standards, this body has less reality in comparison to the materialized body. The materialized body is a higher body and this physical body is a lower body.

This phenomenon requires a lot of willpower to manifest. It requires continuous hammering of the mind. The willpower has to be driven. It also requires a very clear-cut plan. For example, if I want to go to Mr Thakar, his house must be before me. I must see which steps to take, which door to open, who is standing there and where. The whole scene must be in front of me like a cinema picture. It is a continuity of projected thought, not merely one thought.

Suppose you want to go to France to visit one of your students, but you do not know the location.

Unless the place is very clear to me materialization will not take place successfully. So, if I have not seen the place, then I must have a very clear conception of it. I should have a plan and the entire transmission should be directed constantly as if I were piloting an aeroplane. Even as you climb a staircase with the physical body, step by step, without any break in between, in the same way, when materialization takes place, consciousness should be capable of maintaining continuity of travel transition, a continuity of the process of transmission of that form. The mind must always be there. In between, if the mind wavers and goes somewhere, the transmission is lost. If I am climbing the first step, second step, third step and then I forget about it, I am off. So, the guru must remain awake and the whole process should take place in the disciple's mind. In this way the materialization is directed.

What plans do you want to work out through materialization?

We will tell you when the fruit is ripe.

Will you come to your disciples only or will you materialize before anybody?

No, I am working on a mission and I will fulfil that purpose only. The trouble here is that mental contact is not as complete as we would like it to be. There are so many imperfections, whether in the understanding of science or law, or in the mind that transmits. So far as the materialized body is concerned, I am quite sure that it is entirely dependent upon the capacity of the transmitter and that it has nothing to do with the capacity of the other person.

Will the materialized body be able to transmit more?

I think it will be the same as I am. After all, I am directing that person. It is my personal transmission. He carries the

same mind and intellect as me. If I am able to convince you on a certain point, he can also do it, and if I fail, he will also fail.

Please remember that whatever I am telling you here is just my idea, as I have not yet completed my experiment. You may ask, “Will it be real or unreal?” It may be real, unreal or more real. You may ask, “Will it be directed or just spontaneous?” I don’t know exactly, but this much I can say. During my stay in Gangotri, although I did not plan it, many such things took place.

Later on, when I saw Swami Sivananda’s body before me, I kept looking but I could not discover which point of his body was unreal. I saw absolutely the same face, the same clothes and the same brightly polished head. There was no difference in his way of talking, in his tone or in anything. Nothing I found was unreal. Which part seemed to be materialized, I could not say.

How did he come?

He opened the door and walked into my room. When he left, he walked out through the door.

At the time, how did you know it was a materialized body?

I knew it because I had attended his last rites in Rishikesh. So, there was no doubt that he was a divine being and not a physical being. This is a very interesting subject. We do not know exactly what happens when these things take place. Perhaps not only the materialized body but even the man before whom it is materialized may be guided at that time. His speech, action and everything might be guided by higher forces.

Are there any books on materialization?

There are no books which deal with the subject directly. In the Puranas you can find many references, but the way is not clearly written anywhere. Actually it just happened spontaneously with me while I was in Gangotri. In fact,

I didn't even know about it until later on when I came back down to Rishikesh. One man said that he had seen me in Rajnandgaon, another man saw me in Bombay in his home. He said that I had dined with him during the period when I was in Gangotri, and I never went to Bombay or Rajnandgaon at that time. So, this is something very mysterious which has compelled me to think, and I have been thinking about it for a number of years now.

You got your mission from Swami Sivananda only in 1963?

There might have been something in my subconscious mind, but consciously I had only one mission: to keep on roaming, to eat whatever little I could get twice a day and to sleep properly. I said to myself, "Do not mind anybody. This world is the tail of a dog, it is incorrigible, and things go on. I do not have anything to do with this." That was how I used to think.

At Ananda Bhavan I used to get up at three am, take my tea and again rest, no thinking of this world, of what has happened and what has not happened. I was not interested. That was the type of life I used to lead. Two things have disturbed my peace: one is my guru and the other is my disciples. For example, I never would have done this teacher training course if it wasn't for him and for them. I do not know if I am exhausting their karmas or they are exhausting mine. What Swamiji commands and what the disciples demand, that work must be done, maybe teaching, maybe management or anything else. I am your humble servant, that is how I think.

22

Prana Vidya

Class lecture, 13 August 1967

What is prana vidya? It may be a new term to you, but you will come across it very frequently in the Upanishads. Before I begin to explain the term prana vidya and its process, let me first make the word vidya clear to you. In the olden days, during the upanishadic period, vidya was used for the word dhyana or meditation. *Vid* means 'to know' and *vidya* means 'knowledge'. *Prana* means 'life-force'. So, *prana vidya* means 'knowledge of life-force', 'meditation on life-force', 'discovery of life-force', or 'realization of life-force'.

In the Upanishads there are various systems of meditation for different types of aspirants. I may not be able to teach you these practically, but for the sake of your knowledge I can tell you about some of them.

- *Udagitha vidya* concerns the recitation of *Om* in a particular manner.
- *Madhu vidya* is meditation on the essence. Literally, the word *madhu* means 'honey', 'sweet', but here it means 'essence'. Essence of what? Essence of earth, essence of fire, essence of life.
- *Ashwamedha vidya* is meditation on horse sacrifice, but it is not a horse's sacrifice, please remember it. When I explain this type of meditation, you will be surprised at

how wrongly interpreted it is. *Ashwa* means 'horse', *medha* means 'sacrifice'.

- *Panchagni vidya* means 'meditation on five fires'. *Panch* means 'five' and *agni* means 'fire'.
- *Shandilya vidya* is a system of meditation taught by Rishi Shandilya.

There are many other vidyas or systems of meditation which are taught in the Upanishads and, in this way, prana vidya is one of them.

What is prana vidya?

Prana vidya is a system of meditation by which you acquire knowledge of prana. It is a mode, a process or a method by which you are able to move a particular aspect of consciousness which is known as prana. When we use the word 'prana', we are referring to the energy which is the basis of our physical life and which is psychic or astral in nature. Let us call it a force, an all-permeating force, which permeates the whole body.

What is the essential quality of prana? Living life. Where there is prana, there is life. What kind of life? Physical life, intellectual life, mental life, psychic life, spiritual life, higher life, lower life, that is prana. You have prana in vegetables, trees and flowers. It is not just in the breath which you inhale and exhale. It is much more than that. In the Upanishads another term for prana has been given in order to remove that misunderstanding. They call that force mahaprana.

Mahaprana means 'the great prana', 'the higher prana.' It is something other than the breath. In the Upanishads a beautiful story has been given about it. They say that without mahaprana, there is no life. Your breathing may be continuous and your senses may be intact, but without mahaprana nothing will function. So, we should realize what mahaprana is, and the way to realize that is the practice of prana vidya.

Pranic healing

Prana vidya is of great importance in the science of spiritual healing, although the experts in spiritual healing know very little about it. Prana is a force in the body which can be directed through imagination, through thinking. Wherever the prana is concentrated, there you can create an abscess and you can cure an abscess. When prana is directed to different parts of the body, in addition to imagination and thought, you need a thorough knowledge about the inner functioning of the body.

If you have a thorough knowledge of the alimentary canal, you can send the prana down the right tract. If you know how it goes, then you can send it by the power of imagination. If you know many bones you have in your arm, then you can circulate the prana through them. So, although I will be telling you about prana vidya in this course, it will only be a very rough idea, because you must have a thorough knowledge of your body.

You must be able to see the blood vessels, the kidneys, the bladder, and every part of the body. Then, if you practise prana vidya as I will teach you, it will be wonderful. It will be something like injecting every part of your body with nectar, with life. You will touch every part of your body with your imagination. Now you cannot. If I ask you to touch your kidneys through your mind, you don't know where they are, but those who know can do it. When we are constipated, however, we always touch our intestines through our mind.

So, in the practice of prana vidya, you carry your concentrated, intensified, deeper force of consciousness to different parts of your body in a sequence as you did in yoga nidra, but it is not hopping, it is just flowing. I hope that the practice of yoga nidra will help you in this, but remember it is a flow. Suppose you start the psychic flow from the fingertips and then you continue up the arm, you must have the knowledge that the psychic flow is going this way.

Now, the consciousness is to be slowly moved within the body, not outside the body. You must feel that you are inside. Gradually something formless is moving up through a passage. You should be able to visualize the movement through the different parts. However, if you have not got perfect knowledge of the structure of your body, you can still practise prana vidya, but it will not be as effective as it could be.

There are different methods by which prana vidya is to be practised. The pranas can be taken through the bloodstream, bones, nervous system, spinal cord and so on. The pranas can also be circulated through a particular part or point of the body, for example, in the navel. Just take the prana to the navel and keep on rotating it there, or take the prana to the knee and keep on rotating it there.

What is prana?

Is it cold waves or heat waves? Is it a pressure or any other sensation? Is it a force? No, prana is light, illumination. How does prana move? A small string of mercurial light passes through, that is the sign. It may just pass half an inch or less than that, but a small light passes. That is the indication that you have been able to go through the right process of prana vidya.

It is not merely imagination. Of course, in the beginning it is imagination and that is based on ujjayi pranayama, but little by little this imagination should be converted into a small streak of light which is very fine. In that way it should pass on. Sometimes you may be able to see the light, sometimes you may just have a dim, faint glimpse of it or just memories of it.

Prana is neither heavy nor light, it is neither hot nor cold, it has no sensation; it is not something that you feel after sitting in padmasana for half an hour. It is nothing of the sort. Whichever way discovery of prana takes place, the streak of light passes, whether in vision or in dream, in thought or in imagination. So, you can concentrate your prana on any spot or point in your body.

Contraction and expansion of prana

In order to bring down the turbulent tendencies of the mind, the prana must be contracted. When you contract the prana, the movement is upward, never downward. When the mind is very restless, when you are thinking so many things, you don't know what to do, at that time the prana should be contracted, and when you contract, the psychic emotion is ascending. If you are unhappy, some sort of negative emotion has affected you and the mind has become very dull, at that time you should expand your prana. In order to expand prana the motion is downward not upward.

However, if you wish to practise expansion and contraction of the prana, then you have to descend and ascend both, and when you take the prana to a particular point in the body, you must always bring it back. Which is the centre of prana? The navel. The prana always starts from there. Whenever you send the prana to a particular point, you have to bring it back again to the navel. That is the home of prana, the place where the prana is generated. It is there that the prana and apana meet.

The prana always has to be taken back to the navel, otherwise so much energy is lost. So you take the energy to a particular point, visualize it there and then bring it back. When you are sitting in a room you switch on the fan and when you go out you switch it off, so it is something like that. You must turn off the energy, the prana should always remain at the navel.

When the pranas are disturbed they create disease in the body and pain in the mind. According to ayurveda, the ancient system of healing which is part of the Vedas, disturbance of prana creates many diseases. If one wants to practise prana vidya, one should have a definite process for oneself. Either one should practise expansion and contraction or localization of pranic consciousness. This is the theory of prana vidya.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What about dealing with the pranic currents through the spleen centre?

Yes, I think it is mentioned in one of the books on theosophy. I have read about it and I have seen the photographs also. However, the place of prana is surya nadi, the form of prana is the sun and the centre of prana is manipura chakra behind the navel. The spleen may be a minor chakra, but it is not the major energy centre. The centre of prana is the surya chakra at the navel.

Even if we have no knowledge of the structure of the body, can we still visualize the prana moving through it?

Through ajna chakra you can develop the vision of prana in the form of light streaks, then you can move these streaks of light at random throughout the body. Even if you have no knowledge of the structure of the body, first you have to try and develop that streak of light and pass it through your body a number of times. Gradually, if you keep on moving it, you will come to know all the localities, all the roads, all the streets. In this way you will develop inner knowledge of the physical body. Then you can take the prana wherever you like. This is one of the methods in which the discovery of the streak of light is very essential.

What is the difference between prana and apana?

Prana and apana are the twin aspects of mahaprana. The direction of motion of apana is downward and prana is upward. They move in an opposite direction in order to balance the prana throughout the body. If both of them start flowing downwards, then what is going to support the upper body? If all the energies down move towards the centre of gravity then what will maintain the upright position of the body?

Can we change the original direction of prana and apana in order to unite them?

Yes, the flow of prana and apana can be reversed so that they unite at the navel. At that time an awakening takes place.

You said before that prana can be directed out of one's own system. Is this the method to be applied in prana vidya?

Yes. One can remove the disease from another through one's magnetic, pranic force.

Does longevity depend upon prana?

Yes.

What is the process of extracting prana from the air, because when the air enters the lungs, the prana may flow further to any part of the body?

As a matter of fact, the breath and the prana are two different things. Breath goes to the lungs, but prana is different from the breath. Prana is inside the air, inside the blood, inside the bones, inside the breath, inside the perception. It is a force. It is not the breath, it is a force within the breath.

Does concentration on different chakras during the practice of asana help to reverse the flow of prana and apana?

No. The joining of prana and apana is a definite practice by itself. Asanas and pranayamas make the body fit. Of course they are a preparation, but the union of prana and apana through the practice of asana and pranayama alone does not seem to be a possibility. For that there is a different practice altogether.

23

Meditation on Prana

Class lecture, 14 August 1967

According to ancient Indian thought, prana is a complex aspect of human life. Exactly how to understand prana is a very difficult problem. This breath which we breathe and which is the basis of pranayama, is not the prana which is meant here. The five pranas (udana, prana, samana, apana, vyana) and the five secondary pranas are also not what is meant by the word prana. Then do we mean that prana is the awareness, the consciousness in man?

In most of the Upanishads this has been discussed at length and they have made very bold declarations that consciousness and prana are two different aspects of the human body. In the *Prashna Upanishad* it is clearly mentioned that from Cosmic Consciousness two entities have manifested: one is prana and the other is individual consciousness. It means that prana is not consciousness and consciousness is not prana, but, in fact, at present it is very difficult for us to differentiate between prana and consciousness. When we practise prana vidya then we know that it is not possible to realize prana and consciousness as two different factors. Then what is prana after all?

From the Cosmic Mind, from the universal stuff, two forces have manifested. One is prana and the other is consciousness. These are the twin channels that flow in our

body and in our personality. Now we are not discussing anatomy, we are discussing these two channels which are the basis of our body and mind. It is said that prana and consciousness are represented by the sun and moon. They correspond to surya nadi and chandra nadi, to pingala and ida, to Ganga and Yamuna. In the Upanishads it is said that the sun is prana and the moon is consciousness. In this context, let me explain the word hatha yoga. *Ha* means 'moon' or 'consciousness', and *tha* means 'sun' or 'prana'. When the prana and consciousness unite, it is called the state of hatha yoga.

Therefore, the surya nadi is the channel of pranic flow, through which the prana is distributed, charged and withdrawn. Surya nadi, pingala or Ganga is the passageway of prana and its physical aspect is the right nostril. This should be remembered because it is part of your visualization during the practice of prana vidya. Some scholars say that surya nadi originates from manipura chakra, but the ancient texts and all the saints have said that surya nadi originates from mooladhara. In my opinion, the saints and the old texts are correct, because the basis of a scholar's knowledge is intellect and the basis of a saint's knowledge is intuition.

Both ida and pingala originate from mooladhara and flow up the left and right sides of the spinal cord, alternately crossing at each chakra: swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi. At ajna they unite with sushumna, forming one channel. Sushumna is the symbol of cosmic energy in man. From ajna the united nadis go up to bindu and sahasrara as one flow of consciousness. I wanted to make this clear so that you may have a concrete conception when we begin the practice. It is symbolized in India by the meeting of Yamuna, Ganga and Saraswati, which flows underground, at Prayaga. From there it moves on as one nadi, one river, one flow. Similarly, after ajna there is no difference between prana and consciousness. There is only a kind of cosmic awareness.

Distribution of prana

The form of prana is rays of light. For example, when you gaze at the stars at night and suddenly tears begin to flow, at that time, points of light are stretched a little bit sideways. The rays that you see then are very fine and they keep on moving. That is similar to the form of prana. Normally it can be said that prana has a golden colour, but in a number of ancient texts it is said that the colour of prana keeps on changing. Sometimes it is red, pink, brown, yellow or white, according to the tattwas or elements operating at that particular moment.

In the Upanishads it is said that this prana, which originates in mooladhara and goes up to ajna, is distributed by 72,000 channels throughout the body. This distribution takes place from ajna, not from mooladhara. So we should not wake someone up suddenly. We should let him get up of his own accord because sometimes what happens is that the prana does not move up to ajna and therefore it does not get distributed. So the person may be wide awake, but he doesn't know where he is. Of course, this is a momentary experience, it does not last very long. So when you practise prana vidya, you must remember that prana is distributed from ajna.

In the Upanishads it is written that the 72,000 channels distribute prana to the five organs of action, five senses of knowledge, the organs of the body, the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the excretory system, the musculoskeletal system, the nervous system and the brain. In all the functions of our being you can find prana. You can withdraw the prana from all those centres and distribute it to other centres, or you can distribute more prana to one centre and less prana to another. These are the possibilities and so there are many different practices in connection with this prana vidya.

In tantra shastra the practices of prana vidya are very extensive. For one who can pronounce Sanskrit correctly, these practices are quite easy to do. That is because in

tantra shastra the transition of consciousness through the pranic passage has been written in words. You go on speaking in the form of mantra and thus you continue moving your prana from point to point. It is just like the travelling of consciousness during yoga nidra from one point to another, guided by suggestions. In the same way, in the practice of prana vidya, the movement of prana is guided through so many different centres of the body, including the inner portion of the bone, by mantra chanting and by mantra formation. For those who cannot read Sanskrit and find it difficult to chant the mantras, I have evolved a very simple method by which you can train your prana gradually through the mental consciousness. Finally you will realize it and then you will be able to distribute it wherever you like.

Awakening of prana

The central prana is a force which is situated at the root of mooladhara. This central prana is a very powerful force from which the energy proceeds from moment to moment and goes throughout our being. In the Upanishads it is said that when the central prana rises up to a higher level, the bodily organs and senses just look at it, they do not know what to do. From their respective centres the senses say, “Oh prana, come down. We cannot live without you.”

I am just pointing out here that the central prana can be awakened. It is not only for charging your body with extra prana, not only for reducing the quantity of prana from different parts of the body, but prana vidya is also performed in order to awaken the central prana which is situated at the root of mooladhara. This is the ultimate aim of all great yogis. Prana vidya is a practice which most people like because they can charge their fingers, their eyes, their thoughts and they can use it for healing and other purposes. However, for spiritual purposes the knowledge of prana, the awakening of prana, the flow of prana, the central headquarters of prana, is to be known only for awakening.

Later on when you study kundalini yoga, then you will know what prana is.

The awakening of prana is a great event in the life of an aspirant. We will begin the practice of prana vidya from tomorrow. However, that will not be the awakening itself, but the practice of awakening, because now we are moving on the mental plane or, at the most (those who are a bit more advanced), on the psychic plane. Once we are able to transcend the intellectual plane of consciousness, the actual awakening of prana begins.

I will not go into the details now about the awakening of prana shakti because this is a different topic altogether, but I will just say that the awakening of prana shakti is the awakening of everything in man, his entire potentiality. This must be made very clear. It is something like a terrible pain at some part of the body which suddenly goes up to the brain. In the scriptures it has been described as the flight of a golden bird from earth to heaven. The bird reaches heaven by the help of a golden string.

Charging and withdrawal of prana

According to an Upanishad, I have formulated a very simple and elementary technique for the charging and withdrawal of prana which will be enumerated here in brief. First of all, using your mind and imagination, try to develop the concept of the psychic passage which is located at the centre of the spinal cord. Then, with the help of ujjayi pranayama, raise the prana up the psychic passage through all the chakras from mooladhara to ajna.

Now, for the time being, forget about the psychic passage and take the prana to the different areas of distribution according to the practice, maybe to the right arm or left arm, to the heart, lungs or brain, to the right side of the body or the left side of the body. Distribution of prana takes place in the following way. Suppose you want to distribute to the right arm. Take the prana to the right shoulder, the upper arm, the elbow, the forearm, the front

of the arm, the back of the arm. All these points should be very clear in the mind.

At this time you must practise psychic contraction and relaxation of the different parts of the body where the prana is being distributed. The contraction should not be muscular. The body should not move at all. It is possible to contract and relax your whole body in this manner. The concept should be very clear. After contraction and relaxation, take the prana back through the same passage to ajna, and from ajna take it down to mooladhara and leave it there.

This is a very simple practice arranged for an absolute beginner. Those who practise this sitting in an easy chair must keep the legs in one straight line. It is better to practise without any clothes on the body, but since that is not possible for all people and at all times, you can wear any loose fitting clothes which will not hamper the flow of thought and energy. Suppose you are wearing a tight blouse, instead of feeling the flow of energy inside the body, you are feeling the tightness around your chest and upper arms. This should be avoided. Metallic objects should also be removed from the body as they impede the flow of prana.

Additional practices

There are several preliminary practices which are included in prana vidya. One of the most important is the merging of prana and apana. First you must become aware of the natural movement of prana and apana. You will find that prana moves upward and apana moves downward, therefore, the two never meet. Now, try to reverse the flow of energy so that prana flows downward and apana flows upward. You must feel the prana and apana colliding near the navel. You must even feel them dashing against one another like waves.

Another practice which can be used to increase the awareness of prana is expansion of prana in the form of light rays. Remember, prana can move in all directions, even outside of the body. So in the practice first you take the prana up to ajna and from there create a luminous circle

or triangle around your body. If it is mental, it will just be thought or imagination. However, if it is actually prana, you will see the light streaks very clearly.

Now concentrate around your head. From there, radiate one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten rays of light just as you have seen in pictures of Christ and other saints, but in this practice, you must create it. This is part of prana vidya, extending your prana in the form of light rays.

Next, we have a very interesting practice which is done in order to obtain an entire view of prana – to see the prana as a whole. It is a very negating practice in which you will feel that all the parts of the body are dissolving and disappearing. The eyes are dissolving and finished, the nose is dissolving and finished, the brain is dissolving and finished. Forget about the prana for some time. Start from the toes and go to the head and go on dissolving and dissolving. You will actually feel that your nose is melting, melting, melting and goes off.

Then you move your awareness down the body from head to toe and you will discover the form of prana throughout the whole body. This is not so difficult as you might think. After some practice it is very easy for you to dissolve any part of your body and ultimately you will find the luminous body, but that will be experienced for just a fleeting moment. I can assure you it will not continue for a whole minute even. It will happen in the lightning of a second.

The mantra

The mantra for prana is *Gayatri* and this mantra has three forms. In the early morning *Gayatri* is a little girl. At noon she is a young woman in full bloom. In the evening she is an old woman. Similarly, the colour of *Gayatri* is red in the morning, yellow at noon and grey at night. The nature or characteristics of *Gayatri* also change according to the time of day. In the early morning she is innocent and childish, at noon she is charming and beautiful, and in the evening she is full of *jnana*, wisdom.

So I think this should also be the description, colour and characteristics of prana. *Gayatri* mantra represents the entire form of prana, therefore, it is the mantra for prana vidya. It has twenty-four syllables.

*Om bhurbhuvah suvha tatsaviturvarenyam
Bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat*

Rules of the practice

By the method of prana vidya you can charge the weaker parts of your body with prana. However, it is necessary to first perfect the practices, then the charging occurs. Unless you have developed the awakening of prana, you cannot charge your own body or the body of others. It is not possible.

There is a very strict rule regarding this practice. Those who are expert in prana vidya and are able to use it for charging ailing or suffering people must refrain from accepting any kind of remuneration from those persons. Suppose I charge your body with prana, I must not expect anything for that from you. In tantra shastra it is clearly written, “Neither gold nor silver, cloth nor food, nothing can be accepted from the person you have helped through prana vidya.” That is the rule for those who practise this technique for the sake of healing others.

For the withdrawal of prana, you should first take the prana back to ajna and then bring it down to mooladhara. Afterwards open your eyes and feel that the body is lighter, the consciousness is intact and the understanding is there. You know you are lying down or sitting and now you have to get up. The normal consciousness has to be checked properly and when you are satisfied, you can get up from the practice.

However, when you open your eyes and you do not know where you are, you do not know whether it is morning or evening, then you should close your eyes again, go up to ajna with one ujjayi breath and come down

very slowly. This forgetting happens more often in the advanced stages, not in the beginning. Sometimes it also happens in the middle of the elementary practice. So, the practice of checking the consciousness should be done right from the beginning and after the advanced stages it must be done. From now on, when you open your eyes, you must see yourself sitting, the fan is working and everything is all right. Then you can get up.

There are two things in prana vidya which should be done very carefully: one is awakening and the other is withdrawing. Everything else may be wrong without any harm, but awakening should be done with great care and with absolute attention. The same thing applies while withdrawing the energy. Going from ajna to mooladhara, first you go to the right and down to vishuddhi, then to the left and down to anahata, then to the right and down to manipura, then to the left and to swadhisthana, then to the right and to mooladhara. You do not go straight down, please remember.

Until now you were thinking that the psychic passage was straight. Now you know that it is zigzag. Similarly, in the ascending passage the prana goes to the right from mooladhara to swadhisthana, then to the left to manipura, to the right to anahata, to the left to vishuddhi and to the right to ajna. This is the way the prana moves up and down the psychic passage.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

It is possible to awaken the prana within the bones?

There is a particular syllable and symbol for awakening the bone prana. In that way you go on permeating, combining and joining. It is very effective. In tantra shastra not much concentration is involved. There is only the correct pronunciation and the right ritual. If the pronunciation and the ritual are incorrect anything can happen in tantra.

Why should metal not be in contact with the body?

Because of the production of electric waves which can take place at any time. For this reason, when our teeth decay, break or fall out, sannyasins are not allowed to fill them or replace them with metal. It is written in the scriptures that a sannyasin is forbidden to have either silver teeth, gold teeth or any type of false teeth whatsoever. That was said because in those days the artificial bony teeth which are used now were not available, so they had to use gold or silver. If you have metal teeth, when the psychic energy rises up, it will give you a shock – tuk, tuk, tuk! If you meditate properly the electrical shock will be produced when the awakening takes place.

In one of the practices you spoke about expanding the prana and creating a triangle around you. Does this triangle originate from mooladhara and how is it seen?

The triangle formed of prana is inverted and it does not originate from mooladhara. It is in front of you.

Have you been teaching prana vidya for many years?

This is the first time I am teaching prana vidya to anybody except my closest disciples.

Is there any book available on prana vidya?

There is no book, but in *Prashna Upanishad* and many other Upanishads prana vidya is discussed.

24

Pranic Healing

Class lecture, 15 August 1967

As far as the application of pranic energy for the treatment of diseases is concerned, the methods employed by people in different countries vary more or less. In India pranic healing is very common. In practically every village you can find at least one person who is an expert in the application of pranic healing. These healers are called *ojhas* and their main duty is to help others by the application of their psychic power. These healers do not accept money and gifts for their work, and if they do they cease to be real healers.

Twenty years ago these healers lost their repute in society because of wrong propaganda by the new type of intellectuals in India. It had almost been decided that the healers were charlatans, that they were cheating society, and that they had breached the main faith which consisted in not receiving gifts of any kind for their work. However, during the last twenty years many new ideas have come in regarding different healing methods and so in India pranic healing is once again being practised.

Kusha grass method

In India, when a baby has fever, in a village or a town, in a rich or a poor community, one always calls a pandit in order to find out the nature of the illness, whether it is psychic,

somatic or psychosomatic. Then the baby is carried to a spiritual healer by the parents, never by an intermediary, not even a servant can go. The spiritual healer can never go into anyone's house. This is a very strict condition.

So the mother carries the baby to the house of the healer and the father follows. There are many different traditions. Sometimes one brings a coconut or one brings an erika nut which is wrapped in a betel leaf and then tied with red thread. This is a custom. The baby is then placed near the healer who tries different methods for finding out the centre of psychic illness.

He may use kusha grass which is very magnetic and is always used in spiritual and occult ceremonies. First he passes the kusha grass over the front of the body from the top of the head down to the feet. Then he repeats the process down the left and right sides of the baby until at last the kusha grass stops by itself over the centre of illness. This is due to the fact that the prana in the psychic healer feels the centre of psychic illness in the child.

The evil eye

Another method is used for curing diseases caused by the evil eye. Certain persons have a tendency to transmit evil or strange powers through the eyes, causing fever or cold to others. In order to dispel this, wood charcoal, red chillies and mustard seeds are put in an iron vessel which is placed near the patient. If he sneezes and coughs as is natural, it means that the problem is not due to the evil eye. If he does not cough and sneeze, it is a sign he is affected by the evil eye.

A method of curing fever and illness caused by the evil eye is to heat up some chillies over the fire which are then swung in circles over the head of the patient, a pause being made after each circle. No speaking is allowed during this time. The healer then walks out onto a footpath or to a crossroad where he places the preparation and makes a fire, then he puts his heels over the fire which does not hurt him

due to some power. This process is supposed to bring the fever down and the patient is healed.

Karmic illness

When an illness is not caused by the evil eye, then the kusha grass method is used to discover the centre of illness. It may be due to some other cause, for example the healer might find out that it is due to ill treatment by her husband or family. Then the healer reveals this cause to her husband or relatives, saying this is not a physical illness, but an outcome of karma.

This is all part of the healing process. The healer then says, "I can heal her just now, but she is bound to have a relapse unless the other causes from which the illness originated are corrected, because the disease is not due to physical factors." He then asks the husband or relatives to find out what might have caused the illness. The whole thing may be due to the husband although he is ignorant of the fact. So the healer tries to make him aware of this and tells him to make her well again. Usually the husband or relatives then confess and promise to improve the situation, but if the persons concerned are ignorant and deny everything, then the spiritual healer may refuse to do the healing.

Vibhooti

Once the treatment is started the healer takes some ashes mixed with dried cow dung which is then burnt to ashes. These ashes are filtered, mixed with milk, made into balls and dried. These balls are also set on fire, giving a bad smell, then the ashes are filtered and mixed once more with milk. This process may be repeated from eleven to fifty-one times as prescribed. That is called *vibhooti* which means 'psychic glory and power'.

The preparation is placed between the eyebrows of the patient and mantras are sometimes said. The healer then blows the preparation away and repeats the process three

times, after which salt is placed on the space between the eyebrows. This is also blown away, but with more force and a little sound. Only the thumb is used to apply the preparation to the forehead.

The healer then goes about three miles away, nobody knows where, to perform his secret practices. After this he returns and asks how the patient is feeling. If the latter is not feeling all right, then the healer ceases his practices and does nothing more for the patient. If he is feeling a bit better, then the healer says, "Take him to another healer." If the patient is completely healed he must go away and never return to the place.

Removal of poisons

Then there is the blowing method which is done in case of poisons in the system. With the thumb placed over *trikuti*, the eyebrow centre, central passes are performed over the affected area of the body with a knife having a magnetic blade. The knife must be clean and pure. The healer moves the knife very quickly, fifty to sixty times, over the area of the body where the toxins are. Afterwards he cleans the knife and leaves. This method is only used for the removal of poisons.

For snake bite, scorpion bite, yellow wasp sting and other such cases, a handkerchief is taken and tied in three knots around the area of pain. The healer's hands must not touch the patient's body. The healer's fingers are then made as tense as possible and passes are made over the affected area with a peacock feather. If the area of pain moves then the handkerchief and the passes are moved accordingly. The pain is thus brought down to the ankle by downward passes, after which a black string is tied around the ankle for twenty-four hours.

Experts in removing snake poison say that the poison must not be removed from the system, but absorbed into it. Otherwise where will the poison go? To whom will it be passed? Because whatever it is passed to, whether a person,

an animal, a tree or some grass, it is sure to die. So, the possibility of death is removed without expelling the poison which is absorbed into the system. After twenty-four hours of peace and rest, a strong discipline is then followed by the patient. This kind of healer is found everywhere.

However, in certain cases of red and yellow wasp sting, when the person stung has an allergic constitution, the face swells up greatly and the poison has to be removed. Some lime leaves are broken between the fingers and circular passes are performed with the thumb. The leaves are then thrown away and within fifteen to thirty minutes the swelling is reduced.

Mediumistic pranic healing

In India, if there is an illness, the body of the patient is not touched directly but healing is done through a medium. It is necessary that the medium is able to attain a state of trance, ecstatic trance, during which his body sways. His eyes are closed and silence is observed. The patient then explains his problem to the medium. The medium may not understand, but the operator does. The operator then communicates through the medium asking the patient about the disease. The operator may say that this is a karmic illness or an acute illness. Then he tries to diagnose it.

When a patient seeks treatment, he should always approach the operator directly. The operator says to the medium, "He wants a treatment. Can you give him any?" The medium replies, "Yes" prescribing something very simple like Ganga water or tulsi leaves, as the case may be. Or the patient may be told to lie down on the ground and a cloth is placed over him so that he looks like a dead man. Then the operator and the medium place their hands together under the cloth. The operator and the medium kneel down in front of each other, very closely, several times. Suddenly the cloth is thrown back with a dramatic gesture. This is the treatment given in chronic psychosomatic illness like hysteria. After being healed the patient must never ask,

“If the attack returns, shall I come back again?” By doing so, he will make the healer very angry indeed.

Reviving the dead

In India this is very successfully performed, especially when someone has died from snake bite, drinking of poison, fainting or thrombosis. It is not done if death was caused by high blood pressure or by paralysis. This practice is kept very secret and it is only known to a few.

The healer places a cloth over the dead body and then he moves his hands about inside from top to bottom. He passes his hands over the forehead, the cheeks, the arms, the wrists, etc., to feel whether there is any prana in the body and if there is any use in trying to revive it. If prana is felt then the work begins.

Dancing may be done, circular upward or downward passes may be performed, but no mantra is chanted, because this is pranic healing. The dead person then regains consciousness and leaves the place, going to a river where rituals and rites are performed so that the poison may be disposed of. The healer will then turn black due to the transfer of poisons.

Pranic healers are always poor

Pranic healing is very widespread in India. The lifestyle, the diet and the ideology of these pranic healers is wonderful. Early in the morning they stand waist deep in water performing nadi shuddhi, lifting their arms to the sun. They never urinate towards the east in the morning nor towards the west in the evening.

Healers are always poor and they have very little to eat the whole day. This is due to not taking gifts or fees. The healer just sits down, receives ill people and heals them the whole day. They generally eat bread and milk. No salt or sugar is taken by spiritual healers. Also long exhalation is prohibited for them. They breathe in very deeply, but exhale very little. They also talk very little.

Transferred diseases

There are some cases of diseases being mistakenly transferred by pranic healers to other persons. So there is a rule that no urinating or sleeping should be done under a banyan, peepal or mango tree because diseases are always thrown off by spiritual healers under such trees. Also hairs, nails and pieces of copper carry diseases, therefore such things are buried in the earth. So be careful if you ever find any buried articles.

Once, the son of a very rich family was digging around the foundations of his home and he found a golden image of a snake. Thinking it to be valuable, he kept it. Around that time the boy fell ill and he became thinner and thinner. No cause could be found – no cancer, no heart trouble, so no diagnosis was possible.

At last a priest was called who said that this was not a physical illness, but a divine punishment due to an unknown cause. Then a pranic healer came and made enquires. He found some gold radiations in the boy's body. The family told him about the golden snake which the boy had found buried in the ground. The healer requested them to bring the snake. It was passed over the boy's body and afterwards cast away, thus the boy was healed. The fact was that the snake had been buried by someone because of a disease.

Conclusion

The pranic healers in India know this system of healing. They understand the different types of illnesses, whether they are self-originated or have been thrown off by another person and wrongly contracted. These illnesses can be treated by upward, downward, left, right or circular passes, or by the method of blowing the prana. However, these practices must be properly learned as a science. Today, nearly everybody recognizes the pranic healers, although they have no means to propagate their science because the patient is never allowed to return to the same healer, but still the tradition is gloriously alive.

When the patient is unable to see the healer in person, and the healer is unable to go to see the patient, then the pranas may be sent through a medium, of which there are many forms, in order to heal the patient. Healing can also be done through blessings, mantras and religious rituals, but these differ from psychic healing. It is very difficult to learn pranic and psychic healing. Mantra and prana are very different forces. The mantra is powerful by itself, while prana depends on one's personal capacity and ability to awaken it and direct it.



25

Prana

16 August 1967

You said that the psychic passage is not to be considered as a straight line from now on. Should we use the new passage in ajapa japa also?

This point has confused many people. In ajapa japa the psychic passage is from navel to throat, but in prana vidya we use many different psychic passages. In this respect I can tell you that so far as the term 'psychic passage' is concerned, it is an imaginary path which can be created anywhere in any part of the body. The psychic passage can be from navel to throat, from right hand thumb up to the shoulder, or anywhere. However, for the awakening of prana, we use the spinal channel, following the pathways of ida and pingala nadis which spiral up the sushumna passage, crossing at each psychic centre. This particular passage, through which the pranic energy is supposed to flow up to ajna, is something very real. It is a part of the body, whereas the psychic passage which we create is a part of the imagination. It is not real; it is psychic. So the passage used for the awakening of prana can be called the pranic passage. All the other passages used in prana vidya and in other methods such as yoga nidra, ajapa japa, kriya yoga, etc., can be called psychic passages.

Are there any accessories used for charging the dead body when death is due to snake bite?

The charging is done through the medium of peacock feathers. These are also used to remove the poison.

In the Philippines, psychic operations are performed without any anaesthesia. Is this done with the help of prana?

Yes. In India we also know of many cases where sannyasins, yogis and even householders have been operated on without anaesthesia. It is done by withdrawal of prana from that particular centre. In that case you can definitely say that it is a part of prana vidya.

When the operation is done without any scalpel or instruments, which force is used? Is it prana or some psychic force?

If there is cutting of the body, it is done through prana. It can also be done through mantra, but there it would be prana.

Does the kind of prana differ in different kinds of healing?

It is only one prana and it is part of the cosmic prana. In the context of pranayama, I spoke about the five types of prana, but these related to the different areas of the physical body. Actually, these five pranas are all part of the one prana which is throughout the system. According to yoga and tantra, the prana originates at mooladhara chakra and the centre of prana is at manipura, but the prana is one and the same throughout the whole system and it is the same in everyone, like electricity.

As a matter of fact, the opinion of the Upanishads is that there is only one prana and only one consciousness – cosmic prana and cosmic consciousness or, we may say, total prana and total consciousness. Total prana is known as *mahaprana* and total consciousness is known as *paramatma*. The two forces combined are known as the Cosmic Being, God or Brahman.

This cosmic prana is one, but according to the individual bodies it is separated. Just as electricity flowing through the copper wire channels is separated by fans and tube lights, in the same way the individual mind and body are a separate entity in which the prana is encased.

The reply to your question is that there is only one prana, and between the cosmic prana and your individual prana there is nothing but prana. If you can connect this cosmic prana to your individual prana, your prana can be immediately influenced.

How do you connect it?

The individual prana can be connected through another individual to the cosmic and unlimited prana, but the pranas of the individuals have to be purified, because they are mixed with the consciousness of the physical body, with the mind and with the matter as a whole. So this prana has to be separated from the matter and when it is separated through the practices of yoga, then the individual is able to perceive his body and his prana as two separate things. When this prana is completely detached from the physical matter the individual body becomes one with the cosmic prana. When it is in tune with the cosmic prana naturally it is in tune with all the other pranas.

Can consciousness be converted into prana and prana into consciousness?

I do not believe in monism. I believe in duality, that there are two forces at work throughout the universe. Prana and consciousness are the two positive and negative currents responsible for everything that is taking place at the individual and cosmic level. They cannot be converted into each other. Prana can never be converted into consciousness and consciousness can never be converted into prana. They are two different forces and when they join, then of course, the creation begins. When they separate there is dissolution. If, through meditation, you can separate prana

and consciousness the sensory perceptions of the outer world will not function.

If prana and consciousness are two different forces can they exist in the absence of one another?

Prana and consciousness always flow together as two different entities, positive and negative, but at the time of dissolution they are separate.

When ida, pingala and sushumna meet at ajna chakra and proceed towards sahasrara as a single current, what is that state?

That is the Supreme Consciousness. When ida, pingala and sushumna merge at ajna, that is the state of samadhi.

Is prana separated in meditation or is there simply withdrawal of prana from the physical body?

Prana can be withdrawn from any part of the body to its nucleus at mooladhara. When prana is withdrawn to mooladhara, naturally the consciousness is also withdrawn. When it is withdrawn, what is its form? It is astral. Prana and the consciousness always exist together. It is only in deep meditation or through certain practices that prana is separated from matter, from the physical body. In that case, the dissolution of normal consciousness takes place.

Does a spiritual healer transfer his own prana into the body of the patient?

Prana is not transferred, rather the prana is connected. There are two theories regarding this question. Some people are of the opinion that prana is radiated from the healer to the patient and then the treatment begins. Others say the prana is generated within the patient's own body. It is intensified there and connected with the cosmic prana, and thereby the energy flows to that man.

Is the stream of prana directed by consciousness?

No. Prana is more important in this matter than consciousness. You have to manipulate the prana carefully. If anything goes wrong in manipulation of consciousness, nothing serious will happen, but if anything goes wrong with the manipulation of prana, a new disease is created.

Who directs the prana?

The individual directs the prana through the psyche.

Is consciousness also contracted when prana is contracted?

Well, I would change the term for consciousness to *chetana* or *chit shakti*. Consciousness is a principle being. Prana is not the cause; consciousness is not the result. Consciousness is not the cause and prana is not the result. They are the two forces of the first creator. In Samkhya it is said that *purusha* is consciousness and *prakriti* is prana, and both of them move together.

The consciousness is purusha, therefore it has all the energy within it, but in itself it is inactive. If you want to just operate the consciousness, you cannot. It will not help you. The prana, which is prakriti, otherwise has no power of its own, but it is capable of working, of executing everything. Purusha is a storehouse of energy, but without prakriti it is inert. With prakriti it is capable of action. So, the union of purusha and prakriti bring about action or movement.

Therefore, in Samkhya it says, “Purusha can see but cannot walk; prakriti can walk but cannot see.” Prakriti is always used in the feminine gender and purusha is used in the masculine gender. From the basic concept of purusha and prakriti arose the concept of Vishnu and Lakshmi, Shiva and Parvati, Brahma and Saraswati, etc.

I think that the Samkhya philosophers meant the same thing by the word ‘purusha’ that we mean by the word ‘consciousness’. Etymologically *puri* means ‘city’ and *sha* means ‘sleeps’. *Purusha* therefore means, ‘he who sleeps in the city’. *Prakriti*, which is used in Samkhya to convey

the meaning of prana, has the root *kriti* meaning ‘action, achievement, accomplishment, motion’; and *pra* which is a prefix.

Now you understand that prana is active, but consciousness is full of knowledge. One cannot act without the other. In *Ananda Lahari* by Shankaracharya, the first line says, “Is it possible for Shiva to create, to act, to express, to dissolve, to maintain the objects of creation without the help of Shakti? Shiva without Shakti, matter without energy, purusha without prakriti is incomplete and incapable of expression, manifestation and absolute motion.” That is also the theory you have in modern physics.

Does it mean that there are two different aspects to existence?

There is no duality in the sense that I am one man and I have two hands. You cannot say that I am one man and therefore my two hands are one. Up to a certain point of reality we have to accept the concept of duality. Unless you talk in terms of duality there will be confusion. Then later we can talk about what is called monism.

Can Shakti work independently of Shiva?

In tantra we have the concept of kundalini awakening. Ultimately, the kundalini rises up to sahasrara where it becomes one with Shiva, but afterwards it again descends for the purpose of action. The awakening of power is not action. It is not manifestation or expression. It is only awakening. Shakti becomes one with Shiva in sahasrara and then both of them descend, and that is expression or manifestation.

Have you read the book *Shakti and Shakta* by John Woodroffe? In tantra there is a sect known as Shaktas. They are worshippers of Shakti. They believe that Shakti is first and last. Of course it is true, but I personally believe that Shakti rises first, meets Shiva, and then they both descend in order to act in the world with higher consciousness. When we discuss prana vidya we are discussing that descent. The

mahashakti which manifests throughout the universe in the form of creation, expression and dissolution, is the effect of the union of Shiva and Shakti.

Can one heal oneself through the practice of prana vidya?

Certainly. You can heal yourself through prana and through mantra, but mantra is easier. Prana is more difficult.

What do you mean when you say that prakriti is blind?

This point is given in order to exemplify that prakriti and purusha function in different spheres. One is a storehouse of energy and the other is a storehouse of activity. When both are joined together, the action takes place.

We are discussing prana and from our discussion it has become clear that prana is a power which always moves in the body and outside the body with intelligence. Whether prana is predominant and intelligence is secondary, or intelligence is predominant and prana is secondary is immaterial. The fact is that they go together.

What is the movement of prana during the practice of deep meditation? Is it expanded or contracted?

Extroversion means expanded prana through the limits of the body. In meditation, from the point of pratyahara, the pranas withdraw themselves from the senses and organs. In dharana the pranas are not only withdrawn, but they are almost centralized at mooladhara. When the prana is completely contracted at mooladhara, then kundalini gets excited and ascends to sahasrara. Prana is a power which always moves in combination with consciousness.

26

The Practice of Prana Vidya

Class lecture, 18 August 1967

The technique of prana vidya is very easy to understand, but to put it into practice is not so easy unless you have a very quick imagination. Otherwise it takes a long time before you are able to feel the actual current of prana. For that purpose every aspirant should practise some of the preliminary exercises. Those people whose prana shakti is in an awakened state from birth are able to heal themselves and others, but those who are not able to heal themselves or heal others should develop this awakening through gradual practice.

Stage one

The first practice is awakening the prana forty-nine times from mooladhara up to ajna, as already explained. This concept should become very clear to you.

Stage two

Next you have to distribute the prana. There are several practices for the distribution of prana. After awakening the prana forty-nine times, exhale from ajna in ujjayi and relax the whole body. You have to expand the psychic body, the psychic self. Make a note of this for it will change from point to point.

Another important aspect is that you should get so used to ujjayi breathing that, during the practice, your entire consciousness, your entire faculty of imagination, should rally around expansion and relaxation. You should become absolutely indifferent to the breathing process; not that a part of your consciousness is aware of the breathing in ujjayi and the other part is aware of expansion and relaxation, but your total awareness is on expansion and relaxation. Continue breathing in ujjayi, but shift your attention completely to the body.

How do you imagine relaxation? A man lying down talking to his friend is certainly relaxed. When you relax at night, you become unaware of the body, of prana, of existence. That sort of relaxation should take place. In the lower form of imagination it is like a man who works hard or walks for miles together, then comes back to his home, stretches himself and relaxes. That feeling of relaxation has to be experienced during the practice.

Expansion is a muscular action, but relaxation is not. That is the difference between expansion and relaxation. As far as expansion is concerned, you can do it. However, relaxation requires a very clear-cut concept of the condition of relaxation. So, always remember that, when you expand your psychic body, you bring some of the physical factors into operation, but when you relax, the psychic body has complete freedom. You do not do anything at that time. You just let yourself go. This factor has to be properly understood.

The whole body is to be expanded and relaxed until the actual experience is felt. If it takes place after two rounds, go on to the next practice and, even if it does not take place after fifty rounds, go on to the next practice. In the beginning it is difficult to do vajroli or moola bandha, but with practice it becomes easier. Similarly, it is difficult to expand and relax the psychic body, but with practice you can expand and relax any part. In this way you can cause and release a disease.

Those who have a clear concept of the psychic body will understand this point very well. It is something like your own physical body. As you are in touch with your physical body all the time you are able to move your hands, but there are many organs in your physical body which you cannot move. You cannot stop your heart for example, even if you want to, but there are some hatha yogis who can do that. There are some people who can stop their eye movement, even while their eyes are open. Some people can wiggle their ears by certain muscular control, but you cannot do all these things because they are not under your control.

Just as there is difficulty in controlling the physical body, similarly there is difficulty in controlling the psychic body as well. Even as you gain control over your physical body by certain methods, in the same way, I am teaching you to have perfect control over your psychic body. The only difference is that the physical body is available to you (you are able to see it) while the psychic body is not. You do not know where to find it.

If you are able to have a little glimpse of your psychic body, perhaps this process will become much easier. So, practise expansion and relaxation of the whole body until you succeed in actually feeling it. Do not simply imagine that you are expanding and relaxing. It should be an actual experience and most people have had this experience, I am sure.

Stage three

When you have succeeded in expansion and relaxation, take a deep breath, go up to ajna and practise expansion and contraction. Expand with inhalation and contract with exhalation. In the act of expanding and contracting, do not see if your hand is expanding and contracting, do not be aware of any part in particular. There should be total awareness of the whole body. That is the thing you have to remember.

What do you feel when you contract your body? It is something like moola bandha, but contraction of the body as a whole, not in parts. The awareness is of the whole body in general, but every part should contract and expand. How to expand the body? Just as you expand your abdomen, chest and cheeks with air, in the same way, the whole body is expanded. It should appear to you that the whole body is moving outward and inward in the process of expansion and contraction.

There is a special point to note here. If you find it difficult to become indifferent to the breathing process while doing ujjayi with expansion and contraction, you can switch off the awareness from the body by relaxing instead of expanding and contracting. However, this should only be done if the awareness is split; awareness of breathing and awareness of prana in the system. Then you should switch over to awareness of the stream of breath which enlarges and contracts itself.

Stages four and five

Now you see that your body is expanding and contracting, and each expansion and contraction should be more than the previous one. Then you also have to expand and relax the body in parts. After you succeed in experiencing the body as a whole during the process of expanding, contracting and relaxing, then you have to take up the whole process part by part.

The sequence is left up to the individual. You can start with the right fingers, palm, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, chest, upper abdomen, lower abdomen, hip and thigh. Or you may take a particular bone or organ. First you have to do expansion/relaxation and then expansion/contraction of all the parts of the body. You can practise it through the psychic process or, if that is not possible, with the help of the breath. So it can be done with or without the breath.

The early practice of prana vidya can be done with the eyes open or closed, as you want. It varies from individual

to individual. For instance, I may find it easier to relax and more difficult to contract the body with the eyes open. Your case may be different, but these stages, four and five, should be done only with the eyes open.

Expansion/relaxation and expansion/contraction of the body in parts should be done when you feel a particular flow in the body, or if there is a sensation of expanding, relaxing and contracting. Sometimes you may not feel the sensation. At night however, you may feel the pulse beat and with that you will experience the expanding, contracting and relaxing.

Sometimes the lowest extremities can also be relaxed and expanded with the pulse beat, but never expand, relax and contract the heart. That is the only part of the body which is strictly prohibited in the practice of prana vidya. Only experts can practise control of the heart muscles under the guru's guidance.

There is no restriction about contraction of the brain, except when dullness, heaviness, reeling, vertigo, or any abnormal sensations are experienced. During this practice the prana can be pushed into the interior of the brain. That is very difficult to achieve and there is a special way of doing it. First practise expansion, relaxation and contraction of the brain, then contract the brain to such an extent that you come right to the centre of it. The brain is contracted to a point, then again expanded into a ball. When the brain is contracted into a point, it is in a state where prana can be charged into the cerebral areas. When this is done, you may have the vision of prana.

You may practise prana vidya for months and years, but unless you are able to have a symbolic vision of prana, the *siddhi*, or perfection, will not come. As I told you, the form of prana is the light streak. That is the vision of prana which you must obtain. How will you do it?

The vision should be obtained in such a way that, whenever you close your eyes and switch on to prana sadhana, the light streaks just come. Even as darkness

comes without any effort, in the same way, the light streaks must come. Small streaks of light should be projected from within the psychic body or from the form of the psychic body. When you are able to behold these small streaks, it means that the prana is manifesting. After *prana shakti*, the power of prana, manifests, you can begin applying it. However, this will have to be taught later because there are so many dos and don'ts regarding this part of the practice. If you want to apply prana shakti for healing, then of course there are certain rules and conditions, but we will not speak on this here. It is a technical, complex and very important subject in itself.

Stage six

In addition, there is one more important practice which is used for obtaining the vision of prana. It is very interesting and sometimes quite fearful. You can start at the top of the body or at the bottom. Feel that your right big toe is gradually melting like butter on the fire, the second toe is gradually melting and the third toe. This has to be practised point by point. Every part of the limb should be experienced as melting. Then visualize the whole body minus the right leg.

Next visualize the melting process taking place in the left leg. Start with the left big toe, second toe, third toe, fourth toe, fifth toe. When you have come up to the thigh, then visualize the whole body minus both the lower limbs. The next day when you practise it, you will feel that nothing is there, because this has already been melted. Then gradually you start melting the right and left arms, then the torso, front and back, until finally there is nothing left but the head. Then start melting that.

Ultimately, with the melting of the whole body, the psychic notion of the physical body is completely expelled from the mind and in place of that you will discover the light body. That is the method for evolving the vision of prana. Sometimes it also happens in between, before the whole

body is melted through the psychic process. It may come when you have reached the navel, the knee or even before. When you have developed the vision of the light body and annihilated the notions of the physical body, you will have the vision of prana in the form of light streaks.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Is it possible to visualize the pranic force of other people?

It is possible. When one treats others, streaks of light go out of the body. Distribution of prana begins with expansion and relaxation. Gradually you are able to train your prana in such a way that distribution becomes easier.

During expansion and contraction does the physical body move?

The physical body should never move. Suppose you are contracting the abdomen – do it psychically.

When the vision of prana is developed, are the light streaks seen in certain parts of the body or throughout the body?

The flashes of light cannot be localized in certain parts of the body. Even in the beginning, it is easier to visualize the whole body as light, rather than as many small lights. If you practise dissolution of the psychic notion of the physical body, you will find that within a few days, you can see the light itself, but to have a permanent vision of the light streaks takes time.

Should the prana be contracted to a point in other parts of the body as well as the brain?

The prana is drawn to one point in the brain only. You should expand it in the form of a ball and then contract it to a point very quickly. This is all a psychic process. It is not imagination.

Can expansion and contraction be practised in any part of the body?

You can practise it in any part except the heart. Melting the heart is not prohibited, only expansion and contraction because when you expand and contract the psychic notion of the body, the actual effect takes place in the physical body as well. I am not talking about expansion and contraction of the physical notion, but the psychic notion of the physical body. You feel that there is expansion and contraction of the physical body without making any physical movement. That is the expansion of the psychic notion of the physical body.

In the first stage is awakening of the prana to be done with or without the breath?

Awakening of the prana from mooladhara to ajna should be done without the breath. Ascending and descending of the prana should be done without any synchronization or relation with the breathing. Ujjayi breathing may or may not continue, that is up to you.

How long should awakening and withdrawing of the prana take?

It should take one hour or more, not less. You can just imagine if it takes ten seconds to pass through each chakra, one hour will not be enough. It is very important to have a clear concept of the whole passage. It should take one minute to raise the prana from mooladhara to ajna and one minute to descend.

27

Sanskrit Texts

19 August 1967

What are the different types of Sanskrit texts and how were they passed down?

The Sanskrit texts include all the ancient works pertaining to the social laws of India in different periods. They also include the vedic scriptures of karmakanda, which describe how worship is to be performed on different occasions and other such things.

In olden days what usually happened was that all the texts were transmitted orally; they were not written down. The method of teaching in those times was entirely different. They thought that if one had to retain whatever was heard from the guru directly in one's mind the power of memory would increase. If man depends too much on books the subconscious mind relaxes, it does not become receptive and keen. As a result the power of memory is not developed.

The power of memory is only developed in those cases where the lessons are given orally. So the rishis gave lessons like the Upanishads which were all transmitted orally. It was not that the guru taught the lesson and the disciple immediately took down the notes. We believe that notes were not taken down until decades, maybe even centuries after, like the Gospel.

The guru transmitted the teachings to a few close disciples and that was known as upanishad; *upa* meaning 'close' and *nishad* 'to sit'. The literal meaning of upanishad is therefore 'to sit close' and the idea behind it is secret doctrine. Guru used to call together a limited number of disciples, three or four or five, and he would teach them all the doctrines during moments of ecstasy.

So, texts such as the Vedas and Upanishads are ecstatic revelations. Those disciples who heard the revelation directly from the guru, practised and learned it, and in time, when they had disciples of their own, they passed on the same teachings to them. In the course of time, as the teachings passed from one generation to another, certain differences arose in the text, or should I say in the lessons that were given. For example, I may say, "A man goes to America." You may say, "An individual goes to America." Another may say, "A person goes to America."

Therefore, you may find many different branches in the Vedas. A rishi named Kanwa carried a certain tradition. He made disciples and taught them the Vedas as he had learned them from his guru. Another rishi called Jaimin learned the Vedas from his guru and he taught them to his disciples in turn. Then a third rishi, Parashara, also learned the Vedas from his guru and taught them to his disciples.

Now, what happened was that these rishis taught their disciples the same text they had heard from the guru during moments of revelation, but the matter was not a revelation for them, they had heard it from the guru. So these teachings became known as shruti. In Sanskrit the word *shruti* means 'heard' and the word *veda* means 'revealed'. The rishi just realized it and then he revealed it. He spoke it to his disciples and they heard it.

So, the teachings that were passed down by those disciples who had heard them directly from the guru were known as shruti. When these teachings were passed down to the disciples, they had to learn them by rote because they were not coming from an inspired guru, but from an

intellectual guru. So they were called *smṛiti*, which literally means 'memory'.

Therefore, the Hindu scriptures include Vedas, shruti, smṛiti, Upanishads and puranas. Veda means 'revelation', shruti means 'heard directly', smṛiti means 'learned by heart', upanishad means 'to sit close', and *purana* means 'elaborated in the form of short stories'.

In the puranas short stories were given because these great lessons in the Upanishads were very difficult for the common man to understand and to remember. How else could he remember that Brahman is eternal? Who is that Brahman? So they told the stories of Rama and Krishna, in which the theory of reincarnation and the manifestation of Divinity were revealed in simple language which the layman could understand.

A man in the village who knows these stories by heart believes he knows as much as a philosopher in the university, with the difference that the philosopher knows these stories are false while the village man knows they are truth. The philosopher speaks about Brahman and the concept of eternity, while villagers can relate the same concept in the form of a story.

You must have seen the image of Lord Vishnu reposing on a serpent in the ocean of milk. Lakshmi, his consort, is shampooing his feet, and from his navel Brahma, the god of creation, is emerging. Now, this is the concept of eternity which intellectuals cannot understand and the intellectuals' conception the villager cannot understand, and so the puranas came about.

Apart from these, there is one more important kind of text comprising sutras or aphorisms. The word *sutra* means 'thread'. How did these texts originate? All the different thoughts on one topic were compiled, edited and threaded together in short form, just like notes. Suppose the guru was teaching his disciple a number of texts on a topic such as 'yoga is control over the three dimensions of human personality'. He elaborated on it and the discussion was

very long so the disciple just noted down a few important points.

Now, that small thread has to be interpreted, commented on and explained to a layman. So we have sutras on karma, on yoga, on bhakti, on Vedanta, on Samkhya, on karmakanda. They are small books. You can type the whole text in half an hour, but it is not possible for the layman to understand the meaning of these texts. They only contain the central themes of what was taught by the guru. The disciples just noted them down and taught them to their disciples in turn.

Are the Upanishads part of Vedanta?

The Upanishads are part of Vedanta. As a matter of fact, Veda means 'revelation' and the revelations came in this way. First of all the mantras were revealed to a few rishis. Then the code of ethics or behaviour for the society was revealed. Then the code of conduct as a preliminary to spiritual life was revealed to a few people above sixty-five, and to a very select few the ultimate nature of reality was revealed.

So, revelation of mantra is called *samhita*; revelation of the social code is called *brahmana*; revelation of the spiritual way of life is called *aranyaka*; revelation of the ultimate nature of reality is upanishad. These different revelations were compiled by Vedavyasa who was born of a fisherwoman on an island. He collected them all together and divided them into sections: one for mantra, one for brahmana, one for aranyaka and one for upanishad.

Now, the samhitas were concerned with various types of mantras and symbols used for ritual worship. The brahmanas explained how the various types of ceremonies: marriage ceremony, thread ceremony, death ceremony, etc., were to be conducted. The aranyakas were used by those who were above sixty-five and had fulfilled all their family and social obligations. It explained how they should live, whether they should take their wife with them to the forest, what the relations with the family and children should be, whether

they can take a part of their property with them, whether they should beg or earn, whether they should have a big ashram or no ashram.

So the aranyakas were used by householders who were ready to embark on a spiritual life, but for the *tapasvis*, those who were absolutely detached from worldly life, who just wanted to meditate on the nature of reality and nothing else, the Upanishads were given. Therefore the Upanishads are books of knowledge.

In the Vedas we have three main texts: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. *Sama Veda*, the fourth Veda, is a book of songs. According to references given in the Upanishads, we have more than 1,008 Upanishads, but we do not know them all. Only 108 Upanishads are available in written form. Out of 108, 10 are major Upanishads. They deal strictly with the ultimate nature of reality and do not go into any other point at all.

Then we have the 30 minor Upanishads. They also talk on the ultimate nature of reality, but at the same time they discuss different sadhanas by which you should approach reality, whereas in the 10 major Upanishads, no sadhana is given, there is nothing but explanation about the nature of the Ultimate Being, how we are related to that, and what is our status in the cosmic reality.

Out of all those, the most important and the shortest is *Ishavasya Upanishad*. It is very small, but very powerful. We say that this particular Upanishad is the seed Upanishad from which the conception of Vedanta sprang. So it is also known as the Vedanta Upanishad. That Upanishad is the 42nd and last chapter of the *Yajur Veda*.

So, all these Upanishads come from the Vedas. They are extracted from the Vedas just as you extract a psalm from the Bible. You may present it a little differently, but still it is a part of the Bible. In the same manner, all the sections of knowledge, the parts on mantra, on social ethics, on vanaprastha, are taken out, edited and presented as four different versions.

How many Upanishads have been translated by Max Mueller?

He has translated all the Vedas and Upanishads, but his translations are not as perfect as many of the more recent translations. He had his own limitations as far as guidance was concerned. At the time he came to do his research, the Indian people were not aware of their own heritage. Due to 150 years of British rule, they suffered from an inferiority complex. So even the intellectual class knew nothing of their own culture and therefore he could not get proper guidance. He could only get guidance from the brahmins and they did not know English so he had to have an interpreter. An interpreter is generally one who does not know the subject so sometimes the translations were not apt.

What is Kathopanishad?

It is a very nice Upanishad contained in the *Sama Veda*. Here the question is asked, “Some people say that the soul exists after death and some say it does not. Who will give me the proper answer?” Only one who has gone beyond death, who is able to move beyond this shore and that shore, who is able to maintain the same awareness in this life and in the next life, and also in between – only that man can give us the answer as to whether the soul exists after death or not.

The question is therefore answered in the form of a very beautiful story about a boy named Nachiketas. In the beginning that boy’s father was conducting a yajna or sacrifice during which he gave away many things in charity and he also gave some old, useless and emaciated cows. The young boy was watching his father give away all these old cows and he thought to himself, “Why is my father so selfish? Why does he give away these cows which are completely useless? I am a young boy, why doesn’t he give me?”

So he asked his father, “To whom will you give me?” Of course his father had no intention of giving him away to anyone, so he did not reply. Again the boy asked the same question and still the father did not reply. So the boy waited

a little and then he said, "Tell me, to whom are you going to give me?" The father became annoyed and replied, "Unto death I give you."

Then the boy transcended the normal consciousness and went up to *Yamaloka*, the plane of the Lord of Death, who dispenses the fruits according to the laws of the human karma, but when he arrived there, Lord Yama was out. So, for three days and three nights Nachiketas waited at his door. When Yama came back, his wife informed him that a brahmin boy had been sitting at his door for the last three nights.

So, in order to make amends, Yama offered the boy three boons. For the first boon Nachiketas asked that, "My father who has sent me to you, may accept me back in the same body." The second boon was, "I have heard in the Vedas that there is a heavenly fire and there is a particular way to ignite it, but nowhere in the Vedas is the process written. Can you tell me what that method is?" The third boon was, "Some people say that the soul survives after death and some say it does not. Since you have been moving across the river of death a number of times, can you give me the proper reply?"

Yama said, "Your first boon I grant. Your second boon I grant, but as for the third boon, please ask for something else. You can ask for property, women, progeny or wealth, but do not ask me whether the soul survives death, because that even the gods do not know." Nachiketas said, "But what is the use of other things? I want to know this. You offer me grandsons, property and wealth, but I know they are all perishable. I want that which is imperishable, that which nobody else knows."

Yama tried to tempt him in many ways, but nothing would work. Ultimately he had to concede, "Well, I am very much pleased with your keen longing to know Brahmadvidya. Sit down and I will tell you." Then in Kathopanishad he gave all the knowledge about atman, about the nature of the soul. So, that is supposed to be one of the best Upanishads.

Is Ayurveda a part of the Vedas?

Yes. Ayurveda is a part of *Atharva Veda*. Tantra shastra and a major part of yoga are also a part of *Atharva Veda*. All of the secular sciences: astronomy, astrology, Ayurveda (medical science and surgery), form a part of *Atharva Veda*. Tantra, mantra, yantra, black magic, hypnotism, yoga nidra, prana vidya, ajapa japa, all these things come in *Atharva Veda*.

For that reason the rishis originally did not accept *Atharva Veda* as a Veda. They said, “How can these things be revealed?” The great sage Vatsyayana wrote a book on sexology, but the rishis could not accept it. They said, “How can that be a revelation?” What about a book on black magic – can that be considered a revelation? The rishis said, “No, this cannot be a revelation.” Other people wrote about medicines, herbs, minerals and diseases. However, the rishis did not accept this as revelation either. They said that only the higher knowledge can be revealed.

Ultimately, however, they were defeated and they had to concede that all knowledge can be revealed. Not only the knowledge of brahman, but even, say, Newton’s discovery of the law of gravity can be considered a revelation. So, *Atharva Veda* was finally accepted as one of the revealed books, but many rishis fought for this in groups for centuries together because they wanted the *Atharva Veda* to be recognized.

From a psychological point of view, who was the revealer of the Vedas?

According to the vedic texts, it was Brahma, the creator, who revealed the Vedas. There is a difference between Brahma and Brahman. Brahman is used for Cosmic Being, whereas Brahma is the creator. So Brahma, or I can use the word hiranyagarbha, revealed the Vedas.

Now, in Sanskrit, the word *hiranya* means ‘golden’, and *garbha* means ‘womb’. So *hiranyagarbha* means the ‘golden womb’. It is hiranyagarbha who revealed the Vedas. We come to a point which is very near, though we may not be able to have a concept of that golden womb within us.

It is also explained that Brahma was the one who revealed the Vedas. So, according to us, Brahma is a symbol or representative of the cosmic mind. Mythologically, Brahma is an old man with four heads. In one of his hands he holds the *kamandal*, wooden begging bowl, and staff, and in the other hand he holds the Vedas.

Brahma is a symbol of the cosmic mind, so you can say that the Vedas are revelations of the cosmic mind. For example, when your individual mind is tuned with the cosmic mind, then the knowledge comes in. That is one point. The same thing applies for hiranyagarbha also, but in a another sense. In this human personality there is a golden womb or golden egg from which all knowledge comes.

Which part of our personality is in contact with the Cosmic Consciousness?

It is the mind which is the connecting link. Mythologically, you can approach Brahma through Saraswati. The story of Saraswati is very significant. Actually Saraswati was created by Brahma. She was his daughter; that was their relationship. Then Brahma felt passionate, so he ran after Saraswati and married her. A great criticism is levied on him due to that story; a Hindu god marries his own daughter!

However, to get back to the actual explanation, the cosmic mind is to be approached through intuition and intellect. Saraswati is the symbol of intuitive intellect. This intuitive intellect is born of the cosmic mind and at the same time it is a part of the cosmic mind. So the relationship of father and daughter and of husband and wife are established in the story.

Is intuitive intellect (Saraswati) the same as buddhi?

Saraswati is the goddess of learning, of *vidya*, knowledge.

Is Saraswati a part of the human personality?

Yes. Saraswati, or *vidya*, is part of the human personality.

Is it a process rather than a part?

It is a process and a part, both. You see, all these mental aspects – *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *chitta* (consciousness), are a part of Saraswati. Collectively they are known as Saraswati.

How can we know if what we see or experience in meditation is true, as in a revelation?

According to Patanjali, in meditation, soon after the inner awareness becomes very keen and intense, and external awareness practically diminishes, at that time we arrive at the plane of consciousness known in yogic knowledge as *ritambhara*, which means ‘full of true, natural and original experience’. It means to say you should arrive at a state where whatever you see in meditation or even later on should not be a vision, but part of reality.

Suppose you see a vision in meditation. You know that it was not a material object, but a mental formation. However, there comes a time when thought becomes objective. You see it as an object; you feel it. That is the state when revelations are attained. That was what happened in the case of Mohammed; the Koran was revealed to him. The way revelation has been described in the Koran is absolutely in tune with all the yogic processes; there is nothing false about it.

The process is shutting the outer doors and opening the inner door. When you open the inner door on a higher plane of consciousness, the experience becomes almost objective. The experience is so real that, even when you come back to your normal consciousness, you know that particular object is not existing in this state, but you begin to doubt whether this is true or that is true.

How does Buddhism regard the Vedas?

Buddhists as a whole, of course not the scholars or the true spiritual aspirants, but those who had taken to the path or to the philosophy of Buddhism as a reaction to the religious tradition, were very bitter about the Vedas. They did not

appreciate or value the higher points in the Vedas. They only took up one point, that the Vedas were useless because they advocated animal sacrifice. However, they did not understand the true significance of animal sacrifice.

When Buddha announced that he was the ‘illuminated one’, then the people usually asked, “On what authority can you say that?” He said, “On my own authority.” They said, “No. What you teach is not according to the Vedas.” Buddha said, “I do not believe in the Vedas.” Buddha was also bitter about the point of animal sacrifice and he was right, because during those days society had grossly misinterpreted the esoteric statements in the Vedas and had started to perform actual animal sacrifices.

People were no longer practising tapasya. They were reading too many books. So Buddha said, “Why do you read so much? Why don’t you practise meditation instead?” He was a yogi.

Should animals be sacrificed?

No, animals should never be sacrificed. I personally feel that customs change in every country from time to time. There were times in India and in Europe also when people had to live under oppressive conditions, when they took animal products or they took only vegetables. So, in ancient India, the country being absolutely agricultural, the people were mainly vegetarian, but India is not a vegetarian country now. There are communities that are taking meat almost every day and they consume more meat than Europeans.

We do not disagree with that, but the point is that as far as elevation of the soul is concerned, so far as the acquirement of spiritual power is concerned, this animal sacrifice does not help anyone. What is actually meant in the Vedas is sacrifice of the inner animal, all the instinctive qualities. That is why Lord Shiva is known as *Pashupatinath*, Lord of the animals.

In philosophical terms, animals are always used to represent the lower instincts in man, there are three levels:

animal instinct, human intelligence, and divine intuition. The lower instincts are always relegated to the group of animals. Do you understand what is meant here by the word instinct? That is to be sacrificed. Intellect has to be developed and then it is to be sacrificed. Then intuition is developed and that need not be sacrificed, because intuition itself becomes realization.

Then why was animal sacrifice allowed in the Vedas?

It was allowed because they did not know that it would be misunderstood. For instance, when I read the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayam, I was very impressed by the great conception of this nectar that flows inside khechari, but when the same book is read by the common man he thinks that in one of his poems Omar Khayam says, “Do not worry about anything. Fill up the pot with wine and drink until it is empty, then break it and fill another.” So people take it in the wrong way.

Therefore, in the Vedas it is not the fault of those who have made the statement. They have given explanations in the Upanishads about what is meant by animal sacrifice. In the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*, at the beginning it is said what is meant by horse sacrifice. Even though the true explanation or classification was given by the rishis themselves in those books, the people did not want to read that part. They just read *ashwamedha*, horse sacrifice – take a horse and sacrifice it.

However, if you go on a little further in the same Upanishad, it explains what horse sacrifice actually means. You know what a horse is: a very strong animal which carries you on and on. It is the mind which is as strong and fleet as a horse and it has to be killed; that is *ashwamedha*. Now, how to put this truth into the minds of those people who do not want to understand?

In the Vedas there are three types of sacrifice: *ashwamedha*, *gomedha* and *narmedha*. *Gomedha* means ‘cow sacrifice’, so you can well understand that this is symbolical, because the sacrifice of a cow is something unimaginable for

a Hindu. Gomeda means 'sacrifice of buddhi'; you must kill the intellect. You must fuse the lower mind with the higher mind, the human consciousness with higher consciousness. That is how they have expressed it in the Upanishads.

In other places gomeda also refers to pratyahara, which is the fifth step of raja yoga. In Sanskrit the word *go* has several meanings; it means 'cow', it means 'woman', and it also means 'senses'. So how it is interpreted will depend upon the depth of your understanding.

Narmedha means 'human sacrifice'. *Nar* means 'your self, your personality, your ego'. So *narmedha* means 'to sacrifice, to kill yourself, to kill your ego'. In the Vedas it says you have to sacrifice three things: horse sacrifice, cow sacrifice and human sacrifice. And these things were actually done by people who had no brain to understand the true significance.

Are all animals expressions of some previous stages of the human evolution?

Yes. I can give you a few examples. The bull is the expression of human ego. There is a big bird called a garuda which eats only snakes and it is the expression of intuitive foresight. The peacock is the expression of maximum tolerance. The owl represents blind thinking, acting, and decisions, i.e., what is called in Sanskrit, *vipareet buddhi*. You see a particular thing and mistake it for something else.

In the scriptural texts Lakshmi has the owl for her vehicle, Saraswati the swan, Vishnu the garuda, Kartikeya the peacock and Shiva the bull. Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, has the rat for his vehicle. The rat is an expression of penetrating mind, quick intelligence, immediate decision, and Ganesha is a symbol of buddhi, intellect.

In India no ritual is started without first chanting the mantra *Om Sri Ganeshai Namaha*. They say the name of Ganesha must be chanted first because there is no action in the world which can be done without the aid

of buddhi. Speech, thought, sight, all the karmendriyas and jnanendriyas require the functioning of buddhi. The moment buddhi is absent, you don't understand anything. Your eyes are open, but you don't see. So, the rat is the symbol of clever intellect; keen, penetrating vision. Buddhi also represents the same thing. Take a man who has intellect and subject him to all kinds of calamities; he will always find a way out.

The vehicle of Saraswati is the swan, because it has the characteristic of discernment. Saraswati is the goddess of learning and, through learning, one is able to differentiate between right and wrong, proper and improper. Saraswati represents the quality of *viveka*, discrimination, discernment, analysis. Now, what does the swan do? According to tradition, if you give one kilo of milk mixed with water to the swan, he will drink only the milk and leave the water. So the ability to differentiate between essence and non-essence is the characteristic of Saraswati.

Do you think that animal symbols have something to do with the physical appearance at different stages of evolution?

Yes, when man was at different levels of evolution he had different ranges of consciousness. For example, in the dog incarnation there is a particular range of consciousness. I mean consciousness with a capital 'C'. That particular range of consciousness is always represented by the symbol of a dog. In Hindu mythology the vehicle of Bhairava is a dog. *Bhairava* means 'fearful sound'.

Animal symbology is a subject which needs thorough psychological investigation and study. I don't think anybody has made a proper investigation of these animal symbols which can be found in occultism, magic and other religions. These are the symbols which represent the state of consciousness which was predominant in the past. There are many animals and birds which we have missed out in our mythology.

What about the lion?

The lion is a symbol of dynamic consciousness. Every creature has a particular range of consciousness, but it is very difficult to list all of them. According to Hindu philosophy there are as many as 840,000 varieties of species and in biology there are even more. In the scriptures it is said that this human consciousness is a privilege. Many songs are sung which repeat to the Indian boy or girl that this human birth is very difficult to obtain. After passing through 840,000 births, you have ultimately attained this consciousness, so do not lose it.

Human birth is very valuable in that the consciousness undergoes many pains to evolve through so many species and births in order to evolve to this state. So, please see that your evolution does not stop here or that you do not set up a process of involution in your consciousness. You have obtained this human consciousness with great luck, by God's grace. Human birth is not accessible even to the gods. So you must utilize it in such a way that you further your evolution and do not start a process of involution.

What is the significance of the half human, half animal body?

In Greek mythology you find symbols with an animal body below and a human head above. It means that the human consciousness is developing out of the animal consciousness. When the animal body is above and the human body below, it means the animal instinct is projecting itself out of human consciousness. So the first concept is a symbol of evolution and the second is a symbol of involution.

If Ganesha is a symbol of higher evolution, why does he have an animal head?

The symbol of Ganesha is understood in a different light, not exactly as a psychological symbol, but as the head of all the groups of consciousness. In the collective consciousness there are groups of faculties headed by certain deities, for

example, charity, compassion and service are one group; learning, oratory and art are another. So, each group of faculties is guided by one deity, while Ganesha is the leader of all the groups or faculties of consciousness.

As far as the elephant head is concerned, in this case, it does not represent a process of involution. I think if I tell you the story it will become clear to you. Once, Parvati, the mother of Ganesha, was taking a bath and she ordered him to stand outside and not to allow anybody to come in. After some time, Shiva came and wanted to go in, but Ganesha barred the way. Shiva said, "She is my wife, let me go in." But Ganesha replied, "She is my mother and she said not to allow anybody in." So, Lord Shiva, who was very ferocious by nature, took his trident and sent Ganesha's head rolling. When Parvati came out, she said, "What have you done? You have killed my son!" Shiva said, "Don't worry." Then he replaced the human head with an elephant head.

So here, the elephant head which was substituted for the human head represents the super intelligence in man. The elephant is the vehicle of Lord Indra, leader of all the psychic faculties presided over by the indriyas. He is known as the god of the gods. Gods are psychic beings, astral formations, therefore, the human head was replaced with an elephant head, but here it does not mean 'involution', it is an evolution along a new line altogether. In fact this human head would remain a human head, but they put a psychic head on a human body.

28

Antar Trataka and Chidakash Dharana

Meditation practice, 21 August 1967

Antar Trataka

Please get ready to practise antar trataka. Choose a meditation posture in which you can sit comfortably for 30 minutes without moving. Check the position of your body. Make sure the spinal cord is straight, the head is erect and the hands are on the knees in the position of chin or jnana mudra. Close your eyes. Chant *Om* seven times.

Gradually bring your awareness to the eyebrow centre which is known as bhrumadhya. Do not make tense efforts. Slowly focus your attention at the centre of the two eyebrows. If you find it difficult, take a little saliva on your fourth finger and hold it there for a few seconds, then take it off.

Sit quietly with your awareness at the eyebrow centre. Imagine, or if possible visualize, a tiny star at the centre of the two eyebrows. If you can visualize it, well and good, if not, then try to imagine it. The star may appear for a moment and then disappear; that does not matter. Continue with the awareness of a star between the eyebrows.

If you are able to visualize the star, watch it and try to make it steady. If you are unable to visualize it, then

imagine a solitary star in the sky which is enveloped by clouds. One single tiny star in an infinite sky can twinkle within a moment. If you are not successful, again put some saliva on the fourth finger and hold it there for a few seconds.

Maintain exclusive awareness of *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow centre. Imagine and, if possible, visualize a tiny star. If you are able to visualize it, try to maintain it, but if you cannot, please imagine a tiny solitary star in the sky which is enveloped by black clouds. Maintain awareness of the star.

Those of you who have already practised *bahiranga*, external, *trataka* will know what the inner psychic point is. Imagine or visualize the psychic point, the psychic seed, which varies in colour from individual to individual. After practising external *trataka*, close your eyes and look within. What do you see? A small seed-like object moving upward, sometimes rosy pink or green with a varying outline.

Imagine and if possible visualize this point. If you are not able to visualize it, imagine a brightly coloured seed, a psychic point, becoming more and more clear in *bhrumadhya*. Awaken and maintain the awareness of the psychic point, the luminous dot or the bright seed. Try your best to discover the colour if you have seen that luminous dot. If you are unable to see the luminous dot, then try to make a mental picture of that point.

Now, those of you who have already practised *trataka* should visualize the flame of a candle, the golden flame of a candle. Try to be aware of the flame; visualize it if you can. How does it look at the top? It is pointed. Does it flicker? How does it look at the base? Is it black or green? Try to find out.

If you are unable to visualize the candle flame, start again. See yourself sitting in a meditation posture. In front of you is a desk. Be aware of the height of the desk, the width, the colour and everything about the

desk. Make a mental picture as quickly as possible. On the desk see the candlestick. The base of the stand is broad and the top is narrow. See the candle standing up straight on the candlestick. White wax is dripping down the candle.

See the black wick at the top of the candle. The wick is ignited and surrounded by the flame. What does it look like? Is it mercury, brown, bronze or gold in colour? Is it large or small? Visualize it as clearly as you can. Become aware of the candle flame burning. You can feel the ignited point of the wick. It is not straight, but a bit bent. The wick is burning and that is the flame. According to the position of the wick, a bit bent to the right or to the left, the flame will take its shape. The flame is broader at the base, narrower at the top. At the centre of the wick you can see the point from which the flame emerges. It is smoky black in colour. That is the womb of light.

Now, visualize the whole thing: the desk, candlestick, candle, dripping wax, candle flame wavering a little and yourself gazing at it.

Again go to the eyebrow centre and try to visualize the star. Visualization of a star is actually antar trataka. By gradual practice this inner star will become constant and its development means the development of psychic vision. To see a star within the eyebrow centre, which is psychic in nature, means that you have developed psychic vision.

As quickly as you can, without any tense effort, focus your total attention between the two eyebrows. If you apply a little mercury preparation there it will become quite easy. Within a few seconds you will find the dot becoming clearer and clearer. The pressure point is felt more and more accurately. However, those who can feel the pressure point voluntarily, can practise without application of any preparation.

Visualize a star, a small, luminous star at your bhrumadhya. Then visualize the flame of a candle.

Become aware of the desk in front of you, the candlestick, the white candle, the candle wick, and the flame. See the colour of the flame, the aura of the flame, all around you.

Now put a bit more effort into the practice and bring your consciousness to the centre of the eyebrows again. Keep your awareness steady, continuous and unfluctuating. Collect the awareness from all the different quarters and bring it to the eyebrow centre. Withdraw your awareness from all the parts of the body to this point. Remain aware of the eyebrow centre. There must be absolute awareness of bhrumadhya. This is antar trataka in which you gaze at an internal object and ultimately that object is a star.

Continue gazing into bhrumadhya and try to see a human eye, a beautiful, open eye. See the eyelids, the eye lashes, the whole eye can be seen there. It is a perfect human eye. You should see it with absolute ease, it comes very quickly. Continue this practice. Collect all the mental tendencies and focus them on the form of the human eye.

Between the eyebrows, you have your own third eye. It is deep inside, behind the skin, behind the bony structure of the skull, within the bone matter. It is a small eye which is closed. The eyelids remain tightly together. You can see that it is an eye by its formation. This is the third eye which can be developed by the practises that you have been taught. This third eye is the instrument of psychic vision.

Then try to see the shivalingam. Those who know this symbol can visualize it; those who do not know can imagine it. See a black oval stone projecting upwards from a round platform. You can visualize the shivalingam from any temple or place where you have seen such a symbol.

Finally, see an altar in front of you. On the altar is a crystal stone and you are gazing into it.

Chidakash Dharana

Sit in a comfortable asana. Check that your position is correct. Make sure that you can sit in calm meditation for some time without feeling disturbance in any part of the body. Become aware of the different sounds outside of you – the ticking of the clock, the fan, my voice, the birds and the music.

Next, become aware of your physical body, total awareness of the body. Be aware of your physical being and maintain a perpetual flow of awareness, not of any part in particular, but of the body as a whole. Then switch on to the breath, natural and effortless breathing, and at the same time, maintain awareness of the physical body. You do not have to control the breath. Breathing should be automatic, sometimes deep and sometimes shallow, thus the breathing goes on. Develop awareness of the breath in addition to the physical body.

Suddenly switch to the essence of your being, the space of chidakash. It is the space that permeates every atom of your physical and mental being. It is not the space that is within or without, but the space that is everywhere. It is not the space over your head. It is not the space in front of your forehead. It is not the space of the heart, nor the space of the abdomen or navel, nor the space of the lower part of the body. It is the total space which includes your entire physical being.

When you are aware of chidakash you are aware of the space that is permeating the whole body, not a particular point in the body. Become aware of the chidakash, the totality of your formless existence, the space in which your body exists. It is black in colour and formless. Try to maintain awareness of the colour of chidakash: deep black, light black or any other colour. It changes from moment to moment, colour to colour.

If you minutely observe the passing colours you will find they are changing very swiftly. Sometimes it is difficult to keep pace with the moving colours and vibrations of

the colours. Sometimes they are distinct and sometimes not. You can't understand them, you can't see them exactly, you can't read them. These colours are not the same every day. The colour of your space will not be the same tomorrow as it is now at his moment. Try to be aware of the fast changing, overwhelming colours, the overpowering clouds passing through the chidakash.

Chidakash is a formless existence that supports your physical being. Your being has colour. If you remain aware of the chidakash, if you gaze into it attentively, you will find colour vibrations moving very fast. These colours are symbolic expressions of the life-force within you. Try to be aware of these colours. It is on the basis of these that a new science is learned.

Chidakash is the formless existence, the formless essence, the formless reality of your physical being. It is not the space that you see in front of your forehead. It is not the space at your throat, heart, navel or perineum, but it includes the space of all the centres. Chidakash is the total space and you should identify your awareness with the totality of this space.

Then be aware of the colours within the space. Say to yourself, "I am investigating, watching and recording the colours." If you can see any colours, say them mentally, "red, blue, violet," etc. If you can't see them, say to yourself, "I don't understand." Sometimes the colours are so complex that it is not possible to understand them, but whether you understand or not, you should be aware of the colours.

Try to maintain an unbroken and unceasing flow of awareness regarding this chidakash. Do not let your mental awareness break in between. There must be constant, unceasing awareness, unbroken, spontaneous awareness of the total chidakash, which includes all the aspects so far unknown. Your physical body exists in this formless space. Chidakash is not the body, but the body exists in chidakash.

While practising meditation on this chidakash, you may come across shades of light, a flash of light, a host of lights, any vision, any thought, any object, anything. However, with all that, you must maintain the awareness of the whole chidakash. If your mind goes to the space in front of the forehead, tell yourself, “I want to be aware of the total chidakash.”

First you must understand the chidakash. When you can do that, go on reading the colours. When you are able to read the colours, then you should bring your awareness to the centre of the eyebrows. Go in and become aware of a cave with a circular opening. You are aware that there is a cave, but you are unable to go into it.

Repeat the whole meditation again. Become aware of your physical body, of your physical being. Intensify your awareness of the physical body until you are completely aware of the existence of your body as a whole. Then switch on to the normal breathing process. You must watch the breath with continuous, unbroken awareness, with absolute attention and vigilance, and at the same time total body awareness must remain. Then, with a jerk, become aware of chidakash – the space within, the space without, the formless space, the space which is undefined. Within that space, you are.

Next, find out the colours. Become aware of the colours. Even if you are not able to mark or record the quickly flowing colours, it does not matter for the time being, but be aware that colours are coming and going with a terrific speed. From moment to moment the colours change and that you should see with utmost care and vigilance, and it should be seen in every part of the body. Perception of colour, witnessing the colour, pursuing the colour, noting down the colour, reading the colour with care; that is your main objective now in chidakash.

Remember, when I say “chidakash”, I do not mean the dark area or the inner firmament in front of the

forehead. I mean the whole space, the totality of all forms of awareness. If you are able to handle chidakash you are able to handle a very great thing. If you are able to understand chidakash, you are able to understand the essence of your physical being. If you are able to feel it, you are able to feel the psychic principle in man.

Now, go to bhrumadhya and carve a cave there with a circular opening. Glance within it from a distance and you will see it is dark inside. If you go near the opening and peep in, you will see it is very dark, nothing can be seen, nothing can be understood. If by chance you wanted to go inside, you would not see a thing, not even yourself. That is the deeper aspect of chidakash.

Repetition of the mantra *Om* seven times. While producing the *Om*, please convert the sound waves into subtle psychic waves by becoming aware of the entire personality in chidakash, devoid of the physical awareness. While producing the Omkar, imagine that all around, all within and everywhere is the dark space, the formless space of chidakash. In between there appears to be a flickering, a fraction of awareness of the physical existence. The body seems to be the form of awareness, the form of formless awareness.

Gradually take your mind outside. Become aware of your physical body, fans, etc. Then expand your awareness outside. Become aware of the sounds, movements and so on, of the persons sitting around you and the instructions being given. Be sure that you have become extrovert, you are aware of outer things. You can hear fans, music, my voice and aspirants around you. Feel yourself sitting in the asana, feel your head, arms, legs, feel your whole body. Open your eyes.

Hari Om Tat Sat

29

World Brotherhood and Bhakti Yoga

15 September 1967

What is the role of yoga in the establishment of world brotherhood?

The problem of world brotherhood is very clear. About 200 years ago, before the development of science and technology, there was very little difference between the East and West. There were only a few national and rational differences. Now science has changed world views radically. However, people living in Asian countries have not developed as fast as people in Western countries. They keep to old thoughts and traditions, so the gulf of difference between East and West has now become very great.

At this time the world needs some philosophical system which can be embraced by both East and West, so that no one feels alien to it, and I feel that yoga is a system with which both the East and West can feel at home. Of course there are some differences between western and eastern yoga, but as far as the scientific mind is concerned, either in the East or in the West, it will accept yoga.

Therefore, the role of yoga in the establishment of world brotherhood is supreme, but here we should use the term yoga philosophy, not yoga practice. Yoga practice is very difficult. Yoga philosophy is very nice; it is good for intellectuals. In yoga philosophy you can bring East and West

together. So far as the individual is concerned, yoga practice is all right, but society needs a philosophy, not only practice.

I feel that the world crises we are undergoing are crises of difference and the differences are increasing day by day because science has exploded many superstitions in western countries, but has not been able to do so in eastern countries. So, naturally, eastern thought and western thought lie a great distance apart, and that distance of thought should not be there. If world brotherhood is to be established, the people of the East and West should think along common lines, they should have similar goals and ideals. In this way yoga can bring them together.

Can you tell us what will be the actual yoga philosophy for universal brotherhood?

It is very difficult, because if we want to discuss yoga philosophy, we will have to do so from a historical background, beginning with Samkhya and then the yoga of Patanjali. In Buddhism there was one philosophy called yogachara which spread to Tibet, China and Japan. Then we come to modern times. What is the necessity of the people? What have science and modern psychology proven? In that light we will have to think about the relevant yoga philosophy, metaphysics, yoga ethics and so on.

You have said that yoga is the heritage of the past, yoga is the need of the hour and yoga is the culture of tomorrow.

Yes. It was in the museum, now it is in the open arena.

Do you think the different religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Mohammedanism will eventually be merged into one world religion?

No. They will serve as a part of yoga. All religions nowadays teach nothing but ethics. Whatever religion you go to, they will say, "Do not speak falsely." This is ethics, it is not religion. As a matter of fact, whether it is Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism or Zoroastrianism,

all that remains is ethics. They teach you to be righteous, to be truthful, that is all, but religion is meant to be much more than that. Therefore, religion will become one limb of yoga, as far as yoga ethics are concerned, and yoga ethics will have to change according to the needs of the people and the times.

Do you foresee any future for yoga in the communist countries?

Yes. Very recently one swami was invited by the government of the Soviet Union to teach yoga there. They have also ordered my book *Dynamics of Yoga* to be displayed in the embassies and institutes. Now they are going to make a display of yogic culture – asanas, pranayama and meditation, in the National Gallery. They have also done research into the possibilities of telepathic communications between two persons by relaxing the tensions of the mind. So those are some of the things they have been doing in the field of yoga and in the future these activities should increase.

What is the path of bhakti yoga?

Yoga means ‘union’ or ‘communion with your own self’ through karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, kriya yoga or jnana yoga. These are the important yogas, but I have my own fixed opinion about bhakti yoga. It is very difficult to become a true bhakta. You can practise any yoga by willpower. You can get a few books and keep thinking about the reality of Brahman. Any great author can impress you about the mystic practices then you will do them. If you read some of the books on karma yoga, you can practise that also, but even if you read the Bible and *Ramayana* a hundred times, you can’t become a bhakta.

Only that person, who has devotion from birth, in his original nature, should practise bhakti yoga or the path of devotion. It is not possible to develop bhakti through others, through books or through a guru. It comes of its own, spontaneously. A bhakta is not as serious as a raja yogi.

He is a person who has surplus emotions, and a person with surplus emotions does not know how to adjust them except with God. If you don't have surplus emotions or if you do, but you are adjusting them in other places, you cannot be a bhakta. This is the secret of bhakti yoga.

Personally, I believe that one only becomes a bhakta by God's grace. There are two types of bhakti: one is ritualistic and the other is Divine. Ritualistic bhakti differs from country to country, from religion to religion. You may go to the church or temple, you may worship God on an altar, you may have a nine-day ceremony, or you may worship towards the east, west, north or south. That is the ritualistic path of devotion. Listening to the Lord's name, doing japa, reading the scriptures are all ritualistic bhakti. That type of bhakti will not help you ultimately.

You can only be a bhakta if you have faith, and faith is always blind; it is never backed by intellectual convictions. If you want faith and intellectual conviction to coexist, neither of them will help you. Both will go on fighting like co-wives. If you have faith, you have bhakti; if you have no faith, you have no bhakti.

However, the spiritual path becomes shorter if you have bhakti, the speed of evolution becomes quicker. On the mystic path, for instance, if you are practising kriya yoga, how long can you do it for? Three, four, or five hours at a stretch, if you do it any longer than that, it might reduce you to gas and the reduction cannot be explained in terms of losing a few pounds of weight; you might lose everything, but if you remember God as you remember your husband or wife, mother or father, or anyone who is close to you, whom you love, then throughout the day and night there will be no extra generation of heat as in kriya yoga.

Bhakti is a path of love, and the path of love is a path of remembrance. The path of remembrance is only possible when you love someone and when you remember him or her, that is the only person who exists for you. It is not actually what you call a vision. If you have never seen God, how can

you believe in him? How can you love him? If you have seen God, you can love him. Those who have got inborn faith and love for God should always go through the path of bhakti. They will easily reach the point where there is no mental derangement, no stomach upset, no heat, nothing of the sort in their spiritual practice.

How do you remember God? There is a story which is told about Ramakrishna Paramahansa. One day a disciple came to him and asked, "How can I see God?" Ramakrishna said, "It is very easy. Do you love your wife, your son, your bank balance? Do you remember them often?" The man replied, "Yes, I remember them practically every moment of the day."

So, Ramakrishna said, "Okay, now take that love for your wife, son and bank balance, and give it all to God. If you can love God only with that same intensity, he will come to you shortly." That man went away and started loving God. When he came back to Ramakrishna he said, "I am loving God so much that I do not remember my wife, my son and my money. However, you said that I would meet him shortly, but it is fifteen days and I have not met him yet."

Later on Ramakrishna was crossing the Ganga in a small boat and the same disciple was accompanying him. When they reached the middle of the river, Ramakrishna tossed the man into the water and told the boatman to row on. You can just imagine the man's struggle for life. He was gasping for breath and fighting for life with every ounce of his strength.

Finally Ramakrishna went back and picked him up. When he pulled the man out of the river, he asked him, "Well, how did you feel?" The man said, "Oh, it was terrible, unimaginable!" Then Ramakrishna asked, "When you were struggling for life, gasping for breath, did you ever once ask why God was not coming?" The man said, "No." Then Ramakrishna said, "Develop that."

In the Tulsi *Ramayana* it is written, "Even as the most passionate man remembers his wife, as the most greedy man remembers his wealth, in the same manner may I love my

Rama.” So, this should be the intensity of love in order to follow the path of bhakti. Otherwise it is better to do kriya yoga than to go on kneeling in the church or bowing in the temple. Those devotees who go to the church or temple once a week and think they have done their duty are not devotees. They have no love and no devotion. Their hearts are empty. Prayer is not bhakti.

I will tell you one story to illustrate this. Once, a Muslim was sitting by the side of the road in the evening doing Namaz, prayer. It happened that a young girl passed by on her way to meet her boyfriend. She was so absorbed in thoughts of love that she did not even notice the Muslim sitting for prayer and as she walked past she stepped on his prayer mat. This infuriated the Muslim so much that he could not go on with his prayer and he jumped up shouting at her, “You unholy wretch! Don’t you see that I am praying?” The girl walked on oblivious of his shouts, without even stopping to look back.

The Muslim was so offended that he ran after her, demanding to know why she had stepped on his mat. At first the girl was astounded by his behaviour and she asked, “What do you mean? What is the matter?” The Muslim replied with indignation, “Don’t you know that you walked over the mat on which I was praying?” The girl said, “No, I didn’t see you. I was so engrossed in thoughts of my beloved that I did not notice anything, but how is it, that while you were praying to your beloved God, you took so much notice of me?”

This is the difference between the path of love and the path of religion. The path of bhakti to God should be like the young girl who was completely absorbed in thoughts of love. The Muslim was only praying, but that is not bhakti.

But it was human love?

Human love which is transferred becomes divine love, and divine love which is transferred becomes human love. There is no difference. It is the same intensity of currents that are channelled.

If we offer flowers to God as somebody offers gifts to his beloved, is it pure bhakti?

If you actually love God and then give a little present of flowers, it is pure bhakti, but if you do not really love and just go on giving a few sweets and flowers it is not bhakti. There are many stories about this type of bhakti. The path of devotion is the path of sublimated emotion. It is full of inner strength. The man who does not have worldly emotions, cannot have divine emotions. It is impossible. A man who is dry, cannot cry for the Lord.

Those people who are philosophers cannot be devotees and those who are renunciates cannot be devotees. To become a devotee, it is necessary that you must first be engrossed in the world, you must love the world so much that you stick to it, like a leech. You know a leech? It sticks to the body and does not let go of it. In the same way, you must love the things of the world with so much intensity that you feel as if you cannot live without them. The same intensity of emotion is just topsy-turvy in bhakti yoga.

Bhakti is inborn. You cannot create it. It is not the subject of a guru or a preacher. A person who preaches bhakti yoga does not know it himself. I have love within myself, I won't know how to express it. Love is expressed in the language of feeling, of experience. If you can explain the psychological reactions that you get in worldly love, then you can explain the divine love also, but you can't say how worldly love is, even that is difficult.

You cannot preach bhakti, but what about the impact it had on people through saints?

How many devotees did they create? How many devotees could Christ create? How many devotees could Chaitanya create? Everyone reads *Ramayana* in India, it is a must. Even the uneducated, illiterate person reads *Durga Saptashati* or hears it once a year. Everyone worships Devi also, but there are only a few people to whom the path of devotion is open.

Therefore, those people who do not have heart for God, who have heart only for the world, but who can manage to divert some of their intelligence for higher pursuits, they should practice kriya yoga and other forms of sadhana. Most people are prepared to give a little bit of their intelligence to higher practices, but are afraid to give their heart, because they know that if they give it to God, they will become bankrupt. The wife will say, "Where is your heart?" Husband will reply, "I have given it to God." The son will say, "Father, why don't you love me?" Father will reply, "How can I love you when I am loving God?"

Are the son and the wife not God also?

Oh, that is the real concept of a great bhakta who sees God in all. When he sees God in all, he is beyond all kinds of experiences. It is a very high thing. I have met some of the bhaktas and I think personally that the path of bhakti is very difficult. Of course if you have got it already, then it is quite easy.

If efforts are made in the proper manner, they are bound to give success, but when our efforts are not successful, is it not our fault?

Yes, therefore, we practise bhakti every day. We do a little japa. We go to the temple or church. We kneel down and pray. We know there is no harm in doing it. As you say, we must make efforts and every effort that is made becomes successful. If it does not succeed, it does not matter, it is not my fault. So, we go to the temple, we remember God's name, we read the scriptures in which divine stories are given and still, if there is no change in our minds then it is not our fault. When we consider that everything in the world is divine, everything is a manifestation of the Divine Shakti, then whatever we love is love for God.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to love his wife so much that it has become a part of history, but he used to say to her, "You are my mother." And all their life, they lived together,

ate together, slept together. She is considered to be the divine half of Ramakrishna. Her name was Sarada. You must have read about her life history. She was illiterate, she did not know how to write in Hindi or in English, but her life was very commendable.

She was married at the age of six and Ramakrishna was eight. At the age of sixteen she was brought to his house. There she was given good training by an elderly woman on how to excite your husband, but when Ramakrishna came to meet her he had decided everything finally and he told her, "I have the greatest love for you which I don't have for anybody else in the world. From today you are my mother." Sarada was shocked. At first she could not understand him. It took some time for him to convince her that his type of love could be immeasurable, could be infinite, could be uncontrollable, even between mother and son because so far we are given to understand that only that love between husband and wife is uncontrollable.

By the practices which we have done in different lives, we purify our hearts. In this way avidya, atheism, faithlessness, intellectual interference and so many other obstacles to spiritual life withdraw finally, either in this life or in the next life, when our heart is completely purified. Then bhakti shines like a light. After all, love for God is not something which you can have from outside, it is the spontaneous expression of your own heart.

Now you are finding it difficult to express this love, because there is so much covering, so many interferences. You have to love your children, money, property, and so many things which you have, therefore you are unable to love God. So many interferences, disturbances and diversions are there. As a result of this, the divine love for God in the heart is unable to express itself, or at least we are unable to feel it. The moment we are purified, everything is all right. Then the bhakti evolves like a light in the darkness.

Why is the expression of devotion or bhakti always related with the heart? By heart do they mean physical heart? Is the heart the seat of love?

Yes, the heart is responsible for all emotional expressions, not the brain. In the heart there are certain centres, as you have centres in the brain. Even if your brain is undeveloped, you can still love. The centres of emotion are in the heart, so we must purify the toxins in the heart.

By certain operations are the emotions cooled down?

No. You can cool down the understanding, but emotion remains even after operation. I have got one person who had a frontal lobotomy. He does not understand what we are and who he is, but he can instinctively love and hate. He feels like any other man, but he does not understand what he is feeling. I think that the connecting link between the emotion and the brain has been cut, so he is unable to express it. Suppose you become emotional and start weeping, there is immediate expression. However, if the nervous system has been disconnected, you have emotion, but you can't cry, you can't speak, you can't think. Certain changes take place in the heart which cannot be expressed.



30

Sanskrit and Ethics

16 September 1967

What is the importance of learning the Sanskrit language?

All translations of Sanskrit texts, whether in English or in any other language, are unreliable. There is no language in which Sanskrit can be properly translated. If you want to study the tantric texts, it is very difficult without adequate knowledge of Sanskrit. Of course, there are translations by Sir John Woodroffe and many other scholars, but unless you know Sanskrit, you will not understand the actual meaning of the text.

So you should study Sanskrit very seriously. If possible, even after returning to your own country you must continue your Sanskrit classes, then you will be able to understand the spirit of yoga correctly. You see, it is not possible for me to tell you what I mean by prana and you cannot understand what prana should mean. I may try my best to convey the sense of prana, but you will never understand it. When you learn Sanskrit, however, then you will understand. Then you will not need a teacher at all, because the word itself will convey the meaning.

In the initial stages, Sanskrit is a language which has nothing to do with intellect. It is a language of the subconscious; it is not a language of the conscious mind. If you cram a number of times, it gains momentum in the

brain. The secret of Sanskrit is cramming, and if you do not cram, if you try to understand it by intellect, you will never know it, you will never be able to speak or understand it. That is the secret of Sanskrit.

The easiest way to learn Sanskrit is to cram 210 roots and 7 cases by heart. Then you can make it out very easily. Suppose *gajah* means 'an elephant', *narah* means 'a man'; *gajau* means 'two elephants', *narau* means 'two men'; *gajaha* means 'many elephants', *naraha* means 'many men'. Only remember this and you can make out all the masculine genders ending with the vowel 'a'. They will all have the same formation: *narah*, *narau*, *naraha*; *gajah*, *gajau*, *gajaha*; *devah*, *devau*, *devaha*. If you remember one formation, you will remember all the formations. There is masculine, feminine and neuter gender in Sanskrit.

Can yoga be used to change the evil tendencies of man?

In yoga we do not use the word evil. I believe these evil tendencies are undeveloped spiritual tendencies, just as you have raw vegetable and cooked vegetable. In the same way, evil tendencies exist at a particular state of consciousness, relative to a certain idea. Then again, evil is evil, because it produces harm for others, or it is evil because it is bad for you. As they say, if you commit sins in this birth, your next birth will be spoiled. Your chances for a good rebirth are remote.

Look at any century in history. Even when there were good people, there was always chaos and anarchy in society, there was restlessness everywhere. Therefore, yoga does not talk about evil tendencies. Yoga talks about *samskaras* and states of consciousness. Yoga does not talk about sin and if it did then it would be path of religion. It is only religion that talks about sin. Yoga does not talk about evil tendencies. If any yogic text talks about evil tendencies, we should remove that chapter. Yoga only deals with the development of human consciousness.

Once, this consciousness was covered by the cloak of hair in the animal kingdom and by the cloak of vegetation in the

vegetable kingdom. Now this consciousness is enveloped in the human body. So this consciousness is undergoing certain changes and at lower levels it expresses its innate nature as hatred, greed and so on. In later development this same consciousness expresses higher qualities such as love, compassion, selflessness, peace, tranquillity. In this way it will develop.

The words evil and devil are religious and biblical terms. We don't use them in yoga. We speak about problems of human evolution, not about the problem of evil tendencies. If you practise yoga, you do not become free from hatred because yoga kills it, but because yoga improves the frame of your consciousness. It brings about certain changes in your physical grey matter or in your psychological framework and as a result, that particular tendency which you call hatred ceases and another tendency is expressed.

In the human being there are good and bad habits. Should we try to change them?

As far as yoga is concerned, good and bad are relative expressions. They change from time to time and from clime to clime. What is considered to be bad in India might not be considered to be bad in any other country. Yoga talks about development of the soul, development of consciousness. As trees are developing, human beings are also developing. They give flowers and good fruits. We also give flowers and good fruits and sometimes bitter fruits also.

Is there involution?

No, there is no involution. This intellectual society has made the differentiation based on the capitalistic viewpoints. They categorized the tendencies of man according to what they thought would be most beneficial for their purpose. Those which they regarded as useful were classified as good and those which were not useful were classified as bad. That is all.

Can we try to change people by infusing them with the proper understanding?

Man commits certain deeds, he practices certain things. You cannot stop him. His nature will compel him to act. He cannot stop himself. Well, I can stop myself for some time by my intellectual forces, but nature will not pardon me. There are certain natural expressions in man and those he has got to express, now or a little later. He cannot help it. Because of your intellectual environment, you have come to understand that you should not speak this way, you should not act that way, but this is suppression and at some point it is going to explode the entire life. As a result of this the evolution of the soul will be retarded. In order to speed up evolution of the soul, the best thing is to let the soul function freely.

So there are two ways: expression or suppression. Is there any third way?

No, there is no third way.

Instead of feeling hatred for man, can we not direct our feelings towards God for receiving darshan?

You are talking about some of the old ideas which are not at all in tune with intellectual logic, with intellectual acceptance. Instead of diverting hatred to this man or that man, you divert it to God. Personally I feel that we have confused religion and metaphysics. All those types of thoughts should be scrapped and then we can develop a new line of thought from the very beginning. Then yoga will become pure yoga, *shuddha yoga*.

There are so many religious beliefs and injunctions which have tended to make man become subservient to man externally, not only in Hinduism, but in every religion. If we follow them word for word, we will never improve in this life and our society will become very closed and compartmental. We are improving today because we are fighting with religion. The society as a whole is making advancement because we do not accept religion as a whole. I am Christian, but I do not follow it, therefore I am improving.

If we start to follow Christianity or Hinduism totally, we will fall because religion is old. All religions are based on the fundamental selfish aims of kings, monarchs and rulers. They patronized them because they knew that the instructions given by the religion were in their interest. So religion is not free from capitalistic tendencies and this religious instinct sometimes gets into yoga. We cannot help it, because people are not so intellectual. Therefore, if you want pure yoga, then you will have to differentiate it from religion. I personally believe in God, but I do not believe in religion; this is my final view. I think that religion has been the main cause for men's ignorance, but God is something else.

Can there be any universal religion apart from Christianity, Hinduism, etc.?

There will not be any universal religion at all at any time because people will not allow it. There are many such elements which they will not allow. There cannot be universal religion because the need of nations, the need of people from different countries, is different.

The law of compassion and kindness, etc., is common throughout the world.

That is not religion, it is ethics. Religion is something else. Ethics is a part of religion, it is not the full religion. Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate, these are ethics and ethics are also based on social welfare. From time to time there have been people who give us ethical lessons on the basis of exploitation. Too much ethics in society leads to exploitation. Always remember it. Never be a slave to ethics, otherwise society will not improve.

I am a Catholic, can the ethics of my religion give me ethical evolution?

I quite agree, you are ethically evolved, but there should be some proof that you are spiritually evolved, that you are

integrally evolved, if you can give me the proof, I am ready to accept it.

If my religion says, “Well, Satyananda, you are ethically evolved,” and I can prove that I am integrally evolved, I agree, but if I am only ethically evolved and this man gives me one kick in the morning and one kick in the evening, then I am not evolved. I should be able to throw him off. He should not have the strength to give me a kick. There should be integral evolution. That means financial, intellectual, physical, psychological, mental, etc.

You speak from this point of view, but I am a Catholic. The practices of my religion, through which I feel that I am improving in my ethical life, are very important to me.

Yes, they are important to you, but perhaps if you go deep, you will find that your perfection of your personal and individual ethical life is adding one more stone to the exploitation of society. Rather, you are allowing yourself to be exploited in the name of ethics. You have become so dull, so weak, so humble, so quiet. Oh yes, ethics make a man weak.

Perhaps, for integral development, there is no need of refusing ethics, but there is necessity of transcending ethics?

Yes, there is no need of refusing ethics, but we have to filter it. There have never been eternal ethical laws, universal ethical laws which can stand the test of time. They have always differed from country to country and from time to time. A country could not continue the same ethical values in the next generation, anywhere.

Generally ethics are important for any society.

We have had ethical societies for thousands of years according to history, but I can see the direction in which history is moving. There was a time when ethics was forced on man. Now at least no one can force ethics on anybody.

Aren't ethics necessary for our spiritual development here in India?

No, you are not following the point. A particular society accepts a particular code of ethics only for a facility. We follow a particular code of ethics because it facilitates our community life. So ethics is a social conception. It is not an eternal conception. If you go outside anywhere and do not follow your code of ethics, you are not going to lose your spiritual values. When we try to adjust ourselves or we are expected to adjust ourselves to a particular society or a particular nation, that becomes ethics. Ethics always facilitate social living. It has nothing to do with inner life, psychic life, spiritual life or the after life. Please remember.

This has to be understood without any prejudice. If you do not behave in the way you are expected to behave, if you behave anywhere in any manner you are not going to lose anything. When you go into a church or temple or to a government office, there you behave in a particular way because you have to. If you do not, the whole order will be confused and upset. So, a certain amount of discipline is maintained by them, but the moment you step out of that particular environment, you may behave in your own way. It does not do any harm.

Ethics are only for the facility of society. Ethics are the social order, but there have been very shrewd people in the past and perhaps even today, who have given national ethical principles through the Koran, Bible and other religious books. They have exploited entire societies, millions of people. They have even exploited the birth and greatness of Buddha, Christ or Mohammed.

I have studied history from this angle. Therefore, I always consider ethics to be superfluous. Yet, when I go to your country or I come to your home or you come to my home, I will have to behave in a particular way. In this way, ethics are not completely useless; society needs them, but not your spiritual life.

You see, here all the problems are discussed in a free spirit. You are not expected to accept everything you are told or that is said, but I know you will accept these ideas. They are the thoughts which, not you, but the coming generation are going to search for. In another fifty years nobody will be interested in religion.

Can Sanatana dharma be the eternal religion?

Eternal religion is something which nobody knows. Eternal religion is man's march; it is the evolutionary march of your soul and of my soul.



31

Prana Vidya

Practice, 16 September 1967

Awakening of prana

Please sit in any comfortable position and get ready to practise prana vidya. Your eyes should remain closed throughout the practice.

Awakening of prana takes place from mooladhara to ajna with spiralling movements. Starting from mooladhara, the prana curves to the right and comes to swadhisthana; from swadhisthana it curves to the left and comes to manipura; from manipura it curves to the right and comes to anahata; from anahata it curves to the left and comes to vishuddhi; and from vishuddhi it curves to the right and comes to ajna.

In the beginning, awakening of prana should be practised 49 times with the mala, but when you are used to the practice you do not need to use the mala because you can feel the awakening, the sensation of prana. When you begin to actually feel the movement of the pranic force, then you can go to the next stage.

Start the awakening of prana from mooladhara to ajna and return straight back from ajna to mooladhara. Practise with absolute concentration and awareness. Your mental and pranic energy keep on moving in a spiral up the spinal cord. Go on practising and also continue

listening. When you come to ajna, stop for some time in kumbhaka and then start again from mooladhara. Go on with absolute concentration, feeling the movement of prana.

Now, please remain at ajna chakra in kumbhaka; do not move. Next you have to exhale and relax the whole body. You are not exhaling through the spinal cord; you are exhaling through the whole body, as if all the wind is being exhaled from the body and it is contracting like a balloon. Then, with inhalation, the body expands as if it is breathing in through every pore of the skin.

On exhalation there is relaxation and on inhalation there is expansion. Continue to practise this together with ujjayi pranayama. However, ujjayi is not to be felt in the spinal passage, as in other practices. Here, ujjayi becomes all-pervading. It takes place throughout the whole body, as if every part of the body, every pore of the skin is breathing in ujjayi. When you inhale, every part of your body inhales in ujjayi and then it expands. When you exhale every part of the body exhales in ujjayi and then it relaxes. In this practice there is complete body awareness and synchronization of breath consciousness with body consciousness.

However, you cannot forget ajna. In the next stage the whole process takes place through ajna. Ajna is the storehouse of prana. From ajna, with the help of ujjayi pranayama, the pranas are distributed throughout the whole body on inhalation and then they are withdrawn from the body directly back to ajna on exhalation. When you exhale back to ajna you relax. The process of relaxation begins with the body and ends at ajna. When you relax, the consciousness and the prana withdraw themselves back to ajna. It is relaxation not contraction. You should get so used to ujjayi during the practice of prana vidya that your entire consciousness and faculty of imagination rallies around the process of expansion and relaxation. You should become completely indifferent

to the breathing process. Not even a single part of your awareness should remain aware of your breathing process. Your entire consciousness should follow the forces of prana, the pranas that are expanding the astral body, the pranas that are relaxing the astral body. Your whole body awareness should be on relaxation and expansion, not on breathing, although breathing is going on.

Now, you must come back to ajna and begin the next exercise – expansion and contraction. It is done in exactly the same order. On inhalation you expand the pranas from ajna throughout the body and when you exhale the forces of prana are withdrawn back through ajna and the astral body contracts. With inhalation the pranas are distributed throughout every part of the body and the body expands. Then, with exhalation, the pranas are withdrawn to ajna and the body contracts.

So, the process starts from ajna to the whole body with distribution and expansion. Then from the whole body to ajna there is withdrawal and contraction. The contraction of the body is something like moola bandha, but it is not the contraction of the perineum alone, it is the contraction of the entire body consciousness. It is a psychic bandha, not a physical bandha, in which the body as a whole is contracted.

The process is to be done mentally. The body is to be expanded and contracted, not in parts but as a whole, expanded from ajna to the body and contracted from the body to ajna. It is as if ajna is the centre where contraction takes place. When the consciousness and the pranas are withdrawn from the whole body back to ajna the body is in a state of psychic bandha. Then again, with inhalation the pranas are distributed throughout the body and the body expands fully. Then the body contracts as the pranas are withdrawn back to ajna; it is a returning process.

Try to understand the difference between relaxation and contraction.

Supplying prana to the individual parts of the body

Please go back to ajna and retain the breath. Begin with the right arm. You have to supply prana from ajna to the right hand. With inhalation you supply the prana and with exhalation you withdraw the prana. There is expansion and relaxation of the right arm. The centre is ajna. From ajna the whole process starts. You should force your prana right down to your finger tips, to every part of the right arm. Fill up every pore with prana. Then withdraw the prana back to ajna and practise the same thing with the left arm.

Fill the left arm with prana down to the fingertips and then withdraw the prana back to ajna. Retain the breath there and then you have to go to the right leg. With inhalation you supply prana to the whole right leg and with exhalation you relax. Inhale and supply the prana to your right leg, passing through the right side of the back, that means expansion. Then withdraw the pranas from your right leg, that means relaxation.

Go on supplying pranas to the right leg from ajna, through the right side of the back, down to the tips of the toes and then withdraw the prana back to ajna in the same order. Retain the breath and consciousness there. Then supply prana to the left leg in the same way, right down to the tips of the toes. Supply and expand, withdraw and relax. All the pranas start from ajna and go back to ajna. When you bring your pranas back to ajna, stop and listen.

Now, from ajna send a pranic supply to your right chest and then withdraw it from the right side of the chest to ajna. Supply with expansion and withdraw with relaxation. Bring your pranas back to ajna, retain the breath and listen. Next supply prana to the left side of the chest. Supply and expand, withdraw and relax – this is the way the whole process is done.

Now, come back to ajna, retain the breath and listen. Next you have to practise expansion and contraction.

First of all, supply prana to the right arm and expand it. Then withdraw the prana back to ajna and contract the right arm. While remaining aware of ajna chakra and the prana there, you should first release the contraction of the right arm and then start with the left arm. Supply prana to the left arm and expand. Then withdraw the prana and contract. Retain the prana at ajna for some time and then mentally relax the left arm.

Go on to the right leg. From ajna, supply prana down the right side of the back to the whole right leg, right down to the tips of the toes. Supply prana with expansion and withdraw prana with contraction. Distribute the prana from ajna and withdraw the prana back to ajna. Retain the prana at ajna and relax the right leg mentally. Then go on to the left leg. Supply the prana to the left leg with expansion and withdraw the prana back to ajna with contraction. Retain the prana at ajna and relax the left leg.

Then supply prana to the right side of the chest. Supply with expansion and withdraw with contraction. Relax the right side of the chest, then supply prana to the left side and withdraw. Supply with expansion from ajna and withdraw with contraction back to ajna. Retain the prana in ajna for some time.

The vision of prana shakti

Now, you should have the vision of prana shakti. Supply prana to your whole body directly and then withdraw the prana back to ajna, this process has nothing to do with contraction, relaxation or expansion. If these take place, well and good, but otherwise leave it. The most important thing here is the supply of prana. The light streaks proceed from ajna throughout the body and with the withdrawal process the light streaks gradually go back to ajna.

From ajna the light streaks proceed while supplying prana to the body and, with the withdrawal of prana,

the light streaks are withdrawn to ajna. Even as you see the little sparks shooting forth from a charcoal fire or you see the light streaks shooting forth from fireworks or from a flash of lightning, in the same manner you see the points of light shooting forth from ajna. Prana is seen in the form of light particles. Streaks of light shooting forth throughout the body, to every end, and then you withdraw them.

The vision of prana is something like the light emitted from an electric welder. How do the light streaks come? From ajna the luminous pranic energy proceeds throughout the body in the form of small streaks of light, then again it is withdrawn back to its source, ajna. It is as if ajna is a storehouse of sparks, of light streaks, something like a sulphur packet from which the explosion of prana takes place. The explosion pervades and supplies light streaks throughout the whole body. Then again withdraw the light back to ajna and stay there.

Melting

Next supply your prana shakti to your right hand thumb, let it remain there and try to feel that the right thumb is melting. It is gradually melting. You have to practise this if you want to do healing. If you cannot get a clear conception of this then feel it, as if you were in a hospital and the blood is coming out of your right hand thumb.

Now, get ready to end the practice. Withdraw your prana to ajna. Go back down to mooladhara through sushumna. Become aware of the external sensations, of the environment, of the room.

Hari Om Tat Sat

32

Yoga and Education

18 September 1967

In which way can yoga help to bring peace and harmony into the educational system?

Nowadays people think of education as a matter of intellectual development only. They do not consider that discipline is also part of education. Therefore, in most educational institutions, you will find there is practically no discipline. The relationship between the teacher and those taught is absent. Whether the teacher is great or not, the first discipline that the student must have is respect for the teacher. Otherwise, whatever he learns from the teacher will not become fruitful in his life.

According to Indian tradition, in the gurukul system, it was always the disciple's duty to get up before the guru and shampoo his feet, then the guru would get up. Now, these customs are completely forgotten because that closeness between guru and disciple no longer exists. The students do not live with the teachers and they do not even know how the teachers live.

The relationship between teacher and student is not based on discipline, respect or learning. I learn geography from you because the government has appointed you as my teacher; it is not I who choose you as my teacher. In the olden days students used to develop so much respect for

the teacher from whom knowledge was learned. Nowadays, however, we never even say from whom we have learned. We will only say we are from Delhi University or Oxford or Stanford; nothing to do with the professor or teacher.

Another important factor in education is personal discipline insofar as the student is concerned. Nowadays students get up after their parents. There are some students who never see the rising sun. There are five important characteristics of students which were enumerated to us when we were children. These are: *kaga chesta* – the student must be as alert as a crow; *bakodhyanam* – he must have concentration like a crane who stands still for hours watching for fish; *swananidra* – he must be able to sleep like a dog; *alpahari* – he must eat very little; *grihatyagi* – he must have nothing to do with his family affairs. These are the five characteristics of a great student.

The student's life has got to be disciplined throughout, but unfortunately this type of discipline and order has been completely ignored in the present educational curriculum. Now it appears that a student can lead any type of life. He can do anything except austerity. He can drink, he can read rubbish books, he can wear any kind of dress, but he has nothing to do with austerity, with discipline, with respect or obedience.

In order to bring yoga into the educational curriculum, first you must bring discipline, austerity and absolute respect, irrespective of what you feel. The moment this concept is brought in, then order is established and everything runs smoothly. The fundamentals of yoga are self-control and discipline – *yama* and *niyama*. *Yama* means 'self-control' and *niyama* means 'a particular way of living with law and order'. This is the foundation of yoga. It is on this principle that *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana* are all built. If the foundation is weak, the edifice will also be weak.

If we force this type of ethics, or ‘do’s and don’ts’, upon the student, isn’t there a possibility of suppressing his personality?

No. There will be correct expression. Suppression is only possible when the teacher tries to discipline the student in the most irrational way, otherwise not. Discipline should come from within; it should not be forced. Self-discipline is the result of a disciplined mind and yoga makes its own contribution towards this.

How should yoga be introduced into the educational system in order to bring discipline?

It will have to be introduced as it was in ancient India when yoga was practised by kings, monarchs and rulers, when it was practised by students in all the educational institutes. Students will have to practise yoga in its different aspects. They do not have to practise higher yoga when they are young. The practices will differ for various age groups. From class to class, from stage to stage, the yoga is different. As soon as they take up a profession and become a householder they still practise yoga, but not the same type of yoga they used to practise when they were students.

What type of yoga should be practised by primary school children?

Nadi shodhana pranayama, surya namaskara and *Gayatri* mantra are the first practices which are taught to children between seven and ten years. Before that they learn by samskara, by impressions which they inherit from their parents, which they breathe in the atmosphere of the society.

Should children practise the same yoga as their parents do?

The yoga practices of parents will be different at various times. When the mother is carrying a child she will do different practices and the father will be doing different practices from the mother. At an early age the child may find that his father is getting up at three am and standing on his

head, and then he is doing calm, quiet meditation. In the evening he goes to visit great souls and mahatmas to hear about and try to understand the deeper realities of life.

In later life the yoga becomes more philosophical, but the child should not follow yoga in that way. A local teacher should be engaged for him. That is what used to happen at the age of seven or eight when the child was sent to the gurukul. At that time all of his clothing was removed from him and he was allowed to wear only one cloth on his body, nothing else was taken with him to the gurukul. Then the gurukul used to provide him with whatever it could afford, whether rich or poor.

There the child would remain for twelve years, not returning to his parents until the age of twenty or twenty-five. At this time, from the social and cultural point of view, he was considered to be ready for marriage. After marriage he and his wife would still practise yoga, but not in the serious manner in which he used to practise as a student because in ancient India and even today the gurukul students form an integral part of the school organization. They work very hard in order to maintain the school and that is how they get much of their training. Some of them bring firewood, some help in the kitchen, others help with the classes.

Gurukul students have to get up very early, at about four am and the first thing they do is go to the river bank, take a bath, practise pranayama, wash their clothes and bring back some water with them. The second thing they do is gather flowers from different trees. Then the sacred worship of fire is performed by all the students and teachers in common. After that they have breakfast. At ten am they start their secular study, but up to that time they are busy working together, imbibing what we call team spirit or communal spirit. The same thing is done in the evening, they develop group discipline and efficiency.

Yoga was practised by all the students differently in one way or another. Some of them practised asana and

pranayama, some of them did not. The moment they became householders, most of them went headlong and neck-deep into their duties and they did not practise any asana or pranayama. While in brahmacharya ashram (student life) they were practising everything, but when they entered into the cruelties of life, from morning till evening they had to work hard for their livelihood. So they gave up most of the practices, but retained a few according to their need: bhakti, periodical rituals, etc. As soon as the children grew up and they became free from the responsibilities, they took to yoga satsang, sitting with mahatmas and great souls for one or two hours. This is how yoga is practised differently at different stages in life.

Did girls use to go to the gurukul?

Oh yes. You have heard the story of Shakuntala and there were many other girls also. Hindus stopped sending their daughters to the gurukul only at the peak of invasions when the Huns came down from China and after that when the Mohammedans came. From that time the girls were not allowed to mix at all. During the period of Chandragupta, more than 600 or 700 years ago, the women were very free. They used to take part in political conspiracies. Many princesses and queens were trained in warfare and entered the field of battle in times of need. Queen Kaikeyi went to the war field with King Dasharatha and she was granted two boons later on. After the Muslim invasion Hindus stopped giving any kind of privilege or freedom to women. They protected women. When the British came and behaved in a civilized manner, we let our sisters out.

Can you tell us something more practical regarding the present structure of society and education?

When all of you leave here, you should collect a lot of money and friends and start educational institutions along the lines of the gurukul system. Have your own sannyasins, your own dedicated teachers. Keep rich and poor people altogether

and teach them what they lack, what the universities do not give, teach them the yogic way of life.

What is your point of view about social discipline and freedom?

In free enterprise everybody is asked to do his own thing, because almost the whole world today stands undisciplined except for a few nations where there may be social discipline, but even in those countries there is no individual discipline. Individual discipline is a subject of yoga and social discipline is a subject of political administration. This social discipline has got to be maintained by force in the beginning because there are a few elements who will oppose it, who will try to create undisciplined behaviour. They will have to be corrected, but this is only necessary in the beginning. Once social discipline has been established, there is no need for suppression or compulsion. When there is absolute lawlessness in human society, in order to uproot that lawlessness, a certain amount of freedom has got to be controlled, but when order has been established and that continues for a few years, then gradually you remove the controlling strings and allow more social and individual freedom. That is essential.

I agree that freedom is the greatest heritage of man. However, freedom should only be given after checking the qualifications of each and every individual. Many people do not know why they want freedom. They want freedom to do whatever they like; nobody should stand in their way. If they do something bad, who are you to say? This is the usual conception. People are not aware of the higher aspects of freedom, which is freedom of the self, expression of the soul, which enables one to do a great work. Freedom for the sake of doing whatever one likes is a very narrow, very low, selfish and negative concept of freedom that people have in their minds. There may be a few thousand people in the world who are intellectually conscious of the higher level of freedom, but we don't mean these people at all when we say that freedom has to be controlled for some time.

If someone were to come and take away the freedom of the sadhus what would they do?

As far as fighting any cultural invasion our bedrock is strong. We know the problems, we are aware, that is what we are taught in the ashram. The moment we know that we are not wanted by the people, we go underground. We know how to survive because our training is complete. For twelve years we are trained in this, day and night. Our bodies are made of such stuff that we do not require vitamins. We can hibernate; we can transmute our body substances. We do not depend on society.

Today I can drink tea from a cup and sit under a fan; tomorrow I can sit in the heavy rain for hours together without getting cold. This is the training we were given for twelve years. Many survived that training and many died. They developed pleurisy, pneumonia, TB and all sorts of things, and many left the institution. Those who became seasoned, they survived and they became the in-charges of the monastic sections, like myself.

So, about the sannyasins you don't have to worry. I am sure that no religion will survive. In another fifty years they are all going to be finished, but certain values, eternal values will always survive. The sannyasins have been trained for this purpose right from the very beginning, from the day we are given this cloth. The first thing we are taught is that sannyasa is not for self-elevation, not for *moksha*, liberation, not for yourself, but in order to defend a particular culture in times of need. How to do it? Not by the sword, not by protest, not by agitation, not by going into politics.

These are the ways and means we are taught for twelve years. Like a donkey, like an ox, we are yoked. You have no idea of ashram life; it is such a terrible life. It is something like walking in the monsoon rains, barefooted, without food and then getting fever and no treatment. You think, "Oh I am suffering, please help me", but nobody comes. So, such people are made ready. We have different groups of sannyasins throughout India. The same training is given to

all of them for the purpose of maintaining the eternal values. You can call them Sanatana dharma, the eternal dharma.

These eternal values are very important for humanity, for the ultimate structure of society, not for temporary structure. There are certain eternal structures of society and for them these eternal values have to be kept. Therefore, there must be some guardians and those guardians should not marry. They should not own property. They should have no relative, neither father nor mother, sister nor brother. If you ask a sannyasin if he has any relative, he will say, "Never!" He should not pay allegiance to any religion.

In times of need these people come up, but they do not join together. That is also important. If there is any matter concerned with Hinduism or our country, sannyasins will never join. If they join, it is considered a political error, a mistake. We know what has to be done; we know the right time; we are also aware of prophecies. These traditional prophecies are not written in books. They are given to us orally and we will pass them on to our disciples orally. We are completely aware of the events to come. We are alerted beforehand.

Is there any driving force behind the sannyasa movement?

No, there is no driving force, there is the spirit only. There is no central personality, no central hero. We do not obey the central hero; we have our own.

What will be your guide?

The *dharma*, the eternal values which humanity requires for the eternal survival of its existence, that is our guide. We call it dharma; we do not call it religion. If you ask a sannyasin what he has taken sannyasa for, he will say, "For the sake of dharma." If you ask, "What will you do?" he will say, "We will defend the dharma." If you ask, "How will you defend the dharma?" he will say, "As we are instructed by the tradition." There is no fighting, no demonstration like you have in political groups, nothing like that. It is a different way altogether. There is no conversion either.

33

The Bhagavad Gita: Pilgrimage towards Liberation

Class lecture, 20 September 1967

The eighteen chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita* are the stages of yogic evolution in the path of a sincere aspirant. This great pilgrimage starts from the point of dejection, frustration, depression and ends at the final stage of human evolution. As far as the aspirants are concerned, this stage is the liberation of karma, of the renunciation of everything, where the mind is completely free from attachment as well as detachment. The mind is neither a slave of attachment nor a slave of detachment. That is a state called moksha or nirvana where the mind, the human consciousness, is completely free from all kinds of pains.

According to the highest spiritual science, even the ethical aspirations in life are to be abandoned after a certain stage, otherwise the ethical concepts become complexes at a very high level. Detachment is a very great moral order, but there comes a time in life when even the detachment has got to be kicked off and the mind becomes free even from detachment. In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and in other scriptures it is said that after having attained samadhi or the mental or psychic equilibrium up to a certain stage, the aspirant is instructed to leave even the effort that he makes to attain samadhi.

When you sit down for meditation, what do you do? You try to avoid all thoughts. You sit and watch the mind

and if any extravagant thought comes, you try to avoid it. At the same time, you are alert, you are aware that no outer thoughts enter the mind. However, at a certain stage, even that effort is to be eliminated. In the beginning, whenever an outer thought comes to the mind, you try to stop it, to take it out of your mind. That effort is technically known as *samskara nirodha*. *Samskara* means 'subconscious impressions'; *nirodha* means 'stop'. When subconscious impressions come during different stages of meditation, the aspirant will try to check them, but there comes a stage when samadhi is very close, when he has almost attained mental equilibrium, then the teacher will tell him not to make any effort to control the mental tendencies, not to control the mind, not to control the thought. At the same time a kind of indifference towards all kinds of mental attitudes is developed, which is known as *vairagya*. Finally, even the detachment which you were practising at the beginning to make your sadhana more effective is renounced. That is the highest stage in spiritual life.

The yoga of right understanding

According to *Gita*, the eighteen stages of spiritual evolution begin with the yoga of despondency. When one is dejected or depressed on account of anything in life, maybe true or maybe false, one has to take up the yoga of right understanding. You may call it Samkhya yoga or Viveka. *Viveka* means discernment or discrimination. Even as you discriminate between heat and cold, between good and bad, between right and wrong through your reasoning, in the same manner, when you are nervous and depressed, you will have to analyze yourself, you will have to go in to find out the real cause of worry.

Perhaps some member of your family is creating trouble for you, but the real reason for the trouble might be elsewhere. You may consider that this man is the root of all your problems, but when you analyze the situation deeply, you find the root cause is elsewhere. So the development of

right understanding in regard to death, in regard to insult, in regard to criticism and in regard to all kinds of negative aspects of human life is to be achieved through viveka. How does viveka come in?

Some say that viveka comes through association with the right person who can talk to you on the right points and give you the right angle on life. This is called Samkhya yoga. In order to attain success in Samkhya yoga an important aspect is to be remembered and that comes in the second chapter of the *Gita*, the yoga of steadiness of wisdom. Most of us have wisdom, but it does not remain steady. For some time it comes to us, but in the hour of need it does not. At that time all the negative thoughts come to our mind.

Therefore, the aspect of knowledge which we call Samkhya yoga has to become steady. It has to guide you; it has to sustain you always. That is most important in Samkhya yoga. Otherwise, even after developing right understanding, you may lose it during those moments when everything is against you. When this right understanding has been practised for some time however, you must then discontinue it, because if you practise this for a long time, the mind will again start becoming depressed and nervous. So, the third stage is karma yoga.

The yoga of action

According to the *Gita*, karma yoga is hard work, ceaseless work, work with efficiency, work with equilibrium, without getting affected by the karmas that the work brings you. Maybe it is a success, maybe it is a failure or maybe it is a mixture of both success and failure. Whatever the outcome is you should not worry about it. Work for the sake of self-purification, work efficiently in order to yoke all the tendencies of your mind, work with equilibrium in order to succeed in the work, but if you do not get the desired results you should not worry. That is called karma yoga and that is what has to be practised in every sphere of life.

The yoga of renunciation of fruits of action

Do you think that peace comes through karma yoga alone? No, that is the third stage. Karma yoga alone will not bring peace, otherwise many people who practise karma yoga, who serve selflessly in hospitals and other social work, would have attained peace, but they have not. Then they have to go through the yoga of renunciation of karma and knowledge. Whatever work you have done, whatever wisdom you have acquired you must try to be free from karma and jnana both. You should not feel that you have enough knowledge or that you are doing a lot of karma yoga. That feeling of doership should be absolutely absent.

The sadhaka who has been practising the yoga of right understanding and karma yoga, begins to feel that he is the doer or that he knows everything. Then again *ashanti* will come, restlessness will be revived. However, even after that, if he changes his attitude and begins to feel that he knows very little and that he is not doing enough karma yoga, then the shanti will begin to come again. Therefore, the next stage is karma sannyasa yoga, the yoga of renunciation of the fruits of action. Whatever work you do, whether good or bad, brings certain results such as success or failure or a mixture of both. Then you must keep yourself detached.

The yoga of meditation

At this stage meditation begins, so the *Gita* talks about the yoga of meditation. It is true that if you pick up any man from the street and ask him to meditate he would go mad. It would not be possible for him to meditate, and if he did, his brain would become dizzy because he has not attained the purification of mind. So, the *Gita* says first of all you should try to purify the nervousness, the dejection, the negative attitudes of the mind. Only afterwards, when you have become free from the fruits of your karma, when the karmas do not bind you, when the karmas do not affect you, when you remain untainted by your own karmas, by your own actions, then you should start meditation.

How do you know that you are ready for meditation? Swami Sivananda used to say, “When your day-to-day work does not cause you much worry and anxiety; when you begin to take an interest in your own work and do not think that it is a burden; when you are not working for your livelihood; when you become aware of the spiritual purpose of all the work that you are doing, not the material, national, patriotic, social or economic purpose, but the spiritual purpose, it is at that time you should start your meditation, otherwise not.”

Higher yogas

Then comes the yoga of wisdom and experiences, then the yoga of the imperishable Brahman and then the yoga of raja yoga. Yama, niyama, truth, ahimsa, brahmacharya and all these things come only after you have transcended some of the limitations of your mind. Usually, if people who are unqualified are given lessons on yama and niyama they become dull. When they are given lessons on higher stages of yoga they also grow dull. Therefore, in the *Gita* it says to start meditation after purifying yourself. You should have certain experiences first and in those experiences you must try to have some realization of the imperishable Cosmic Being. Then you are ready to start raja yoga.

After raja yoga is completed, then the glories come. That is called vibhooti yoga. In the *Gita* the word *vibhooti* is used which means ‘glories of the Divine’. Take any miracle; what is that? It is the glory of the Divine. After the manifestation of divine glories or vibhootis, then the vision of the Cosmic Purusha, the Cosmic Being takes place within, with the eyes closed. Then the whole Cosmic Being, in which all the worlds, all the rivers, all the suns and stars, everything is included, is seen in miniature. When this is finished bhakti yoga starts.

The yoga of devotion

Prior to that experience, all the devotees practise bhakti yoga as a part of their mind only. That bhakti is an expression of

their psychologically complex mind. Sometimes at earlier stages bhakti is a form of neurosis. Devotion for Rama can be called Rama neurosis and devotion for Christ can be called Christ neurosis; because the mind is not purified, you brood. Instead of brooding over worldly affairs, you brood over Rama or Christ or anything. Instead of loving a girl or a boy, you love Christ or Rama. It is the expression of your lower mind and that does not help you much.

Real bhakti starts when you have seen Him. It is also said in the *Ramayana*, “How can you have bhakti for the Lord when you have not seen Him?” How can you love one whom you have never met? At least you must have a glimpse. I love you because I have seen you once when you were passing through on the train. However, if I did not see you, if I did not even see your picture, how could I do it? In the same manner, you may love God, you may have actual devotion for God once you have had a glimpse of Him. So, in the eleventh chapter it talks about a glimpse of the Cosmic Purusha in which all the rivers, all the stars and everything that the universe contains are seen by the person within himself. Then devotion begins to grow. The experience is so awe inspiring that you can’t help but become a bhakta.

When the real bhakti begins, then you are able to distinguish between the body and the one who dwells in the body. At present you have only read in the books that there is an astral being and behind that another more subtle being and behind that another more subtle being and behind that another more subtle being. Sometimes in meditation you see something like that or you may see a little colour, a little picture or a little aura, that is all, but how do you know that there is a dweller in the body? Perhaps sometimes if a hardboiled communist, an intellectual thinker, or a scientist comes to you, he may convince you that there is nothing beyond the body. It has happened, it is happening and it will happen because you only know intellectually; you have only heard that behind the body there is the indweller, the purusha, but you have never seen it.

After having attained the vision of the Purusha and having developed devotion or *bhakti* or true love for Him, then you are able to distinguish between the body and the indweller of the body. It is at this moment that the threefold aspects of nature, through which the entire cosmos is governed, can be seen: the *sattwa*, the *rajas* and the *tamas*. These threefold cosmic forces are not to be understood here as ethical forces, because usually in India we say when a man sleeps too much he is *tamasic*, when a man becomes angry very often, we say he is *rajasic*, when a man lives quietly like a saint or a *sadhu*, we say he is *sattwic*. That is the ethical aspect. However, in *Gita* it is not the ethical aspect which is discussed, but the cosmic aspect. In the cosmos also the three *gunas* are predominant. These static, dynamic and equalizing forces in the universe cause all kinds of things. After having obtained the higher vision, you are able to make a clear-cut distinction intellectually and intuitively, and not before that.

Yoga of awakening of kundalini

Then comes the awakening of *kundalini*, when you see the spiritual tree whose roots are upstairs and whose branches are downstairs. The spinal cord is the trunk of this tree and the roots are in the brain. All the limbs of the body are its branches. If you want to go to the root of the tree you have to start from the branches which are upside down. *Kundalini* yoga begins here. After having attained mastery of *kundalini* yoga, then the spiritual aspirant is able to make a clear-cut distinction between the Divine and not Divine. This is right, this is wrong; this is *dharma*, this is *adharma*; this is *deva*, this is *demon*, but of course that is our personal view. We do not know whether we are right or wrong and how are we to decide that?

For that, a certain amount of intellectual evolution is required. Purity of mind is required. A drunkard always loves the man who drinks and the man who does not drink is third rate, unfit for his society. That is the depth of his

conception, that is what he knows. Therefore, in order to understand what is demonical and what is divine, we should first prepare our minds and finally we should decide it. We shouldn't make any final judgements without proper analysis and proper realization.

The yoga of liberation

Before we come to the final stage in spiritual evolution, that is, before we attain *shanti* or inner peace, there comes a vision in which the man sees his faith as clearly as he sees his brother, as he sees his mother, as he sees anybody else or as he sees himself. The faith is seen in different stages of evolution and finally the culmination of faith is liberation.

Liberation is not salvation, it is not mukti, it is not nirvana as it is understood by us. It is a stage which we experience in this life, with this life and for this life. After having attained this liberation through renunciation what happens to a person? Does he leave the body and enter heaven? Or does he become a superman and walk on the air, fire or water? Does he give up his job, money and family and go to live in the jungle? No.

Then what happens to him? He is restless, he is disturbed. Every now and then his judgements are incorrect, his mind is full of complexes and mental errors, it is not at peace. Calamities come and go, disturbances continue, nobody can help it. Birth and death, positive and negative, everything continues in his life, but he looks upon them with the attitude of a witness. Sometimes he experiences joy or pain due to financial affairs or other family affairs, but he is not affected. He looks upon those things as if he were a witness of all the affairs, whether in his own life or in others. Death in his family is just a simple affair for which he does not lament whatsoever. At the same time, if any great success comes to him in life, he may become a prime minister or a president, still he is unaffected. He knows that this is all nothing. These are the simplest things that a man can have.

Although he remains active in the world, he looks upon life with an attitude of indifference. That is the concept of a spiritual man in the *Gita*: a man who is working, thinking, living in the world, doing all kinds of things, but does not attach himself with happenings and affectations of life. That is called *moksha*.

A dialogue about the battle of life

Although the *Bhagavad Gita* is a part of the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, it is not a dialogue between the higher soul and the lower soul. It is a dialogue between a blind person and a person with divine eyes. Dhritarashtra, the king, was blind and Sanjaya, the man with divine eyesight, was looking on. Sanjaya narrated the whole *Gita*. So, the man with the eyes is the narrator and the man with no eyes is the hearer. It is always like that.

The *Gita* is not a sermon on the mount, in the jungle, on the shores of an ocean, or in an ashram. It is a sermon delivered on the battlefield, when arrows are about to shoot forth, when on both sides you could see nothing, but two strongholds of enemies trying to kill one another. At any moment the signal for battle would be given. It was at that time that the sermon was given. You can understand the dramatic situation.

It is not in peace that the sermon is to be taken. *Gita* is not for one who has attained peace. *Gita* is not for one who has renounced. *Gita* is not for one who is dead. *Gita* is for one who has to step into the battle of life, who has to face the turmoils, the trials and the wilderness of life. *Gita* is for one who feels nothing but confusion, nothing but trouble, nothing but dejection. Everything is wrong, wrong, wrong, but still he must face it, he must go forward, he must strive on. The *Gita* is for such a person and it is to be understood in this light.

34

Brahmacharya

20 September 1967

What is the relationship between brahmacharya and God-realization? In which way does brahmacharya facilitate the journey towards liberation?

It is an established truth that without brahmacharya there is no self-realization and those who follow the orthodox way of thinking would never accept any idea except this. It has been so deeply engraved on the mind, through religion and ethics, that unless somebody realizes and sets an example while carrying on with his usual life, people are not going to change their ideas. Although there have been many rishis and munis who have led married lives, still the minds of people have not changed.

Therefore, this subject has got to be dealt with most analytically and without any prejudices. First of all, there are two types of people. One type has negative or passive sexual energy and the other type has positive or active sexual energy. Those people who have passive sexual energy cannot have self-realization unless they observe brahmacharya, therefore they should observe brahmacharya strictly before going on for the higher practices. However, those people who have active sexual energy, and that is a biological factor depending on the hormones secreted by the glands, will never attain spiritual

realization unless they marry and lead a complete, marital life. If they enter into spiritual life by force, by compulsion or even by momentary impulse all their behaviour in spiritual life will be guided by a suppressed sexual instinct. They may meditate, they may repeat the name of the Lord, they may go on pilgrimage to holy places or they may practise asana and pranayama, but their entire spiritual expression will be guided by the sexual instinct.

Of course, there were passive types like Sukhdev and even Christ, for instance, who led the life of brahmacharya, but there were many others who had the vital potentiality like Surdas, the blind poet. In India there is no musician who does not know the songs of Surdas. They were sung in every home by everyone from king to peasant. He was such a tormented man that ultimately he pierced his eyes with thorns in order to blind himself. He said, "These eyes should not look upon women and beget passion."

There is the story of Tulsidas who was originally called Bilva Mangala. He set out in the middle of the night, during a raging storm, in order to meet with his lover. He crossed the flooded river by catching hold of a dead body. When he reached her home all the doors were locked so he climbed up a tree, but still he could not get in. The branches were not high enough. So, he caught hold of a rope, not knowing that it was actually a snake, and climbed up to her window. When he was finally inside, she asked him, "Why have you come all this way in the middle of the night to see me?" He said, "I cannot remain without you." She said, "You have so much love for this body which is nothing but a sack of flesh and bones. If you were to direct that same love to Him, you would have attained Him by now." Those words uttered by his lover made an absolute change in his life.

Therefore, I personally feel that spiritual energy and sexual energy are not two different things. A man who has no sexual energy has no spiritual insight. If you go through the pages of history, you will see how potential many of the saints were, and how absolutely disturbed they were, mentally

and emotionally, by that energy. How was Sage Agastya born? How were Vyasa, Rishi Sringi and Matunga Rishi born?

This sexual power is the greatest power in man and it has to be pacified to a certain extent, otherwise it is very dangerous, even as an atomic bomb is produced on a controlled basis because if there is an untimely explosion, radioactivity is so terrible that even the experimenter will die from it. In the same manner, sexual energy is the explosive energy within man and all that you call prana, all that you call magnetism, is only that. If this energy is excessive and explodes, it can kill the man. However, if it is deficient, it must be preserved. So, the aspirant has to decide whether he has passive sexual energy or active sexual energy.

In India it is the tradition that young people coming for sannyasa are very carefully selected. When people come to us, we know whom to tell to marry and whom to tell to maintain brahmacharya. This is from the Hindu standpoint; it is not from the Buddhist standpoint. In Buddhism they just accepted anybody into monkhood. They did not know which type of man was fit for that type of life and ultimately the whole order perished. The order of brahmacharya should only be given to those who are passive in sexual outlook so they do not have to suppress their nature.

Sometimes it happened that the sexual power is suppressed right from birth through subconscious suggestion and, at the age of eighteen or nineteen, the boy or girl is completely unaware of it. So, it is difficult to know in some cases whether an individual is the active type or not. The sexual personality has to be analyzed through certain symbols in order to find out, but this much is agreed by all: the sexual energy is a very disturbing power. It can disturb a man to any extent, anywhere and anytime. Then how to deal with it?

Suppose you have a vessel which is full of boiling hot water and you want to carry it to the market. Are you going to carry the boiling water or are you going to allow the water to cool a little first and then carry it? You can carry the

cooled water there easily and then heat it again. In spiritual life also there are certain practices which heat up the body. Through kriya yoga, for example, you can heat your entire system. You can produce the same feelings, the same bliss, the same experiences as those which take place when the energy is very high at the time of an awakening.

So, you can heat up your entire system, but then it has to be cooled down again at some point. Therefore, in Hindu philosophy life was divided into four stages: brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and finally sannyasa.

Now, in which way does brahmacharya facilitate our journey towards God-realization? It tranquilizes the nervous system. It prevents a sudden influx of blood to the brain which agitates the nerves. When the nerves are agitated, you cannot maintain equilibrium and steadiness in the cerebral structure. The brain keeps on vibrating physically and mentally. The moment the sexual energy is lowered, the brain is contracted, it is depressed. Then again it rises high and there is vibration. At the time of vibration, however much you may want to control your mind, you cannot, again it will go into symbolic vision.

So, to a certain extent, brahmacharya has got to be fulfilled. Then, when you meditate, the brain is calm and quiet. The nervous system does not agitate the brain. There is no sudden influx of blood. The reproductive glands have an immediate connection with the pituitary gland in the brain. The sexual glands are also directly connected with mooladhara chakra, the root psychic centre where kundalini shakti resides. Mooladhara and the sexual glands are simply two sides of the same coin. When you irritate mooladhara, you irritate the sexual glands.

In that light, you can understand how brahmacharya and grihastha life are immediately connected to God-realization. Now it is up to each person to adjust it according to his nature and need. If he does not know, he has to ask his guru who has experience and knowledge, what he should do. The guru will say, according to the individual case, whether to

marry, produce children, exhaust the mind, cool down the centres and then come to the spiritual life. Or, if the person is calm and quiet: no suppression, no depression and no repression, the guru will say, “The world is useless. Do not get involved in it. Come on and take sannyasa.”

In India they say that even controlled sexual enjoyment takes a man away from the soul. Therefore, according to the Hindu way of marital life, there are a number of days in the year designated for sexual abstinence. On *Ekadashi*, every eleventh day of the dark moon and the bright moon, it is forbidden and on the dark moon night, on full moon day (except when marriage is celebrated), on all the days that fasting is observed such as Shivaratri, Ramanavani, Krishna Janmashtami. There are about a hundred days in the year when sex is forbidden and there are so many rules. They are written in the books called *Manusmriti*, *Yajnavalkya Smriti*, *Parashad Smriti*. These contain the laws for an individual, how one should conduct oneself as a brahmachari, in married life, etc. There are eighteen books in all and, out of these, the *Manusmriti* is most popular. *Manusmriti* means ‘heard by the great Rishi Manu’. When marital life is conducted in this way, then of course it does not take the man away from his soul and self-realization.

Is progeny the main purpose of marital life?

Yes. However, the concept has been changing. Previously it was only for producing children, but later on, during the period of Rama and others, the purpose became companionship. Now the purpose is neither of the two. Neither do the people care for the society, nor for each other. They use contraceptives and then they divorce.

In which way can yoga help us in sublimation of the sexual force?

Well, if a man does not want to involve himself in sexual life, if he thinks that all that is useless, then during periods of meditation much of that heat is consumed, although it takes

more time. By a few asanas the heat that is produced by the sexual glands is consumed, the sexual energy is pacified and the sexual personality of a man is made passive. In that case, however, yoga must be followed together with strict dietary discipline, otherwise not.

Is there any danger of impotency after certain practices of yoga?

There are certain yogic practices in which there is a danger of impotency, no doubt. Not impotency according to the medical term, because that impotency has something to do with frigidity, it is a sort of psychological error. By the practice of yoga that type of impotency and frigidity does not take place. It is a sort of voluntary control. I don't want to eat bread; that does not mean that I cannot eat bread. I can eat it, but I don't want to, I don't like it.

There are many practices in yoga by which you make a psychological change, but there are a few practices by which you make a physical change in the sexual glands, as in vajroli mudra. You may equate it with the state of impotency, but it is not impotency exactly, because in impotency the sex glands are inactive, they are incapable of becoming active and explosive. In vajroli, however, they are active, but the physical nerve connection is completely disconnected though certain kriyas. That particular sex energy then becomes ojas when it is preserved.

Unless one practises vajroli and paralyzes the nervous connection to the sexual glands, there will be emission. However, due to vajroli no nervous impulses cross over so the energy is conserved, it is not spent, nothing happens to it. Later on, by the law of conservation, that energy becomes ojas, a kind of heat that is produced, and that heat has an effect throughout the body, because it comes out of the glands.

You see, it is something like a boil issuing pus and the pus is so hot that whichever part of the body it touches, the whole body becomes hot. When that heat arises in the body, it is immediately followed by light. So, those people who

practise this voluntary control of the sexual glands by vajroli mudra, always see light flashes. Everything becomes light. Just as we see darkness, they see light, they see the whole body illumined. You may say it is a hallucination, but that is what they experience.

If they want to use their sexual glands again is it possible?

No. After vajroli it is not possible; the nervous connection is paralyzed, the sensations are not circulated.

If a passive type of person tries to do this what will be the effect?

If a passive type of person makes an attempt to observe brahmacharya and also to suppress the sexual glands and the nervous stimulation that the glands require, he may become neurotic, and not only neurotic, but he may enter into a deep stage of neurosis. What is deep neurosis? He will be thinking about anything, he will be in the subconscious mind, and if you call him he will not hear. If you ask him a question he will not understand. That type of person is suppressed, he is never alert. The person with active sexual energy is always alert and he can do any number of things at the same time. The person with passive energy forgets things, but the person with active sexual energy has a wonderful memory.

If a passive person with underdeveloped or under-nourished sexual glands, takes up certain kriyas, such as vajroli mudra, what will happen? What little consciousness he had will be suspended, because the activity of the sexual glands function in connection with the pituitary gland in the brain. So, mental activities such as intellect are also diminished. Such people are always introverted; they talk very little and with great difficulty because they have no energy, but the person with dynamic sexual energy has no rest. He will be most benefited by the practice, but first he will need to have some sort of tranquillization in life. Without tranquillity there is no use.

Is the brain power automatically increased by sexual sublimation in the more active type of person?

If sublimation means tranquillization, then of course the brain power is increased. As long as the energy is normalized in the correct way, everything will be all right. However sublimation of sexual energy is very difficult. It is easy to say, "Divert the Ganga," but when you have to do it you will know how difficult and sometimes impossible it is. It is the same with channelling the sexual energy. You may want to become a scientist, a sannyasin or a politician, but wherever you go it will not leave your mind. Even in the Himalayas it will catch you. It is something like a man who, wherever he goes, he carries his blessed nose with him.

Can sublimation be done through dream control?

This should only be done after bringing down the explosive energy. Otherwise, if sublimation is done at the peak of the explosion, it will shatter the personality and make the mind crack. Of course the explosives are reduced to a great extent under the guidance of the guru. Therefore, it is always said that brahmacharya should be practised only after receiving diksha from the guru. Just as there is grihastha diksha, there is brahmacharya diksha also according to Hindu tradition. Of course, it is only done in name now, they only say to observe brahmacharya. They do not teach how it is to be practised.

I know a number of people who have observed this type of brahmacharya and I have seen the results. There was a boy who came to me and said, "I know the Shastras, I know the Vedas and I have observed brahmacharya for many years. I am taking a purely vegetarian diet, milk and fruits. I have no passion, no greed, no anger, but still something is wrong with me. Sometimes I faint or if you tell me something I will forget it and when I go to a shop, I want to eat all the sweets. I have dreams of sweets."

I caught him on that point, because it gave him a guilty conscience and taught him to avoid so many things, but

the sweets he would not avoid because anybody can take sweets; it is not a sin. He said, "Sometimes I want to eat 4,000 or 5,000 sweets all at the same time." I thought this was abnormal so I said I would check him. He stayed with me for some time. When he was sitting, he used to faint and fall down and during meditation he would cry and become unconscious.

Ultimately, I gave him my frank opinion. At first he received it with a great shock. He never imagined that I could give him such a suggestion. I said, "Go and marry and, if possible, marry more than one. Get into it head long and neck deep. Forget the Shastras, forget asana, pranayama and dhyana for the time being. Get into married life completely and come to see me after a few years." He began to argue with me, so I told him, "You have not come here to argue with me. I am telling you not to destroy your life. You are coming to the brink of psychic destruction. Beyond that point there is complete destruction and it is very difficult for yoga to bring a man back from that stage of deep neurosis. Yoga can cure nearly everything, but that deep neurosis cannot be cured, unless of course one has spiritual power like Swami Sivananda, but by the practice of yoga one cannot do it."

Now the boy is married. At first he became very thin with typhoid. He could not stand the rigours of sexual life, because his mind was filled with complexes and so many things were fighting against him. Ultimately, however, he was all right. I also called his wife and gave her some sound advice although it was most unwelcome advice. Afterwards he came to me and said, "Now I am better, my brain has improved and I can think properly again. There are no disturbances and I do not dream of sweets any more."

This is such a deep subject. It is maya's great creation. It is the poison and the nectar. If you take it in a controlled dose it is nectar, *amrita*, and if you take it in an uncontrolled dose, it is poison. When the sexual energy is explosive, it gets completely into the pores of the body, it becomes poison, it kills the man, it creates leprosy and what not. If these explosions are

controlled and the toxins are eliminated from the system, then the energy can be sublimated and it becomes *ojas shakti*, spiritual power. Then it will help you to evolve.

Can we equate kundalini power or serpent power with the sexual force?

Yes. The word kundalini is derived from the word 'kunda', which is the place where the sexual glands are situated. *Kunda* is a small pit, like a havan kund, where the fire is burnt.

Is the serpent a sexual symbol?

No. It is a form. This is how it looks there. It is coiled three and a half times around a lingam inside the small pit. This is the shape of the sexual glands. That fire is the sexual fire and the yogic fire, *agni*. Both are the same, not two and never three.

Is it a mistake that sannyasa is given after fifty when man is impotent and there is no sexual fire?

No. The sexual glands never die. They always remain, even at the age of eighty. It is only the psychological order of the mind. At the age of sixty he thinks, "Now I am finished." At all ages these glands remain intact. It is only a psychological change on the account of the message communicated to the brain by the emaciated cardiac muscles which makes the mind think, "Now no more, the time is over."

Is this nectar, which drops constantly from bindu and gets burned up in manipura, the sexual hormones?

We call the heat of the sexual hormones *surya*, sun, and the nectar we call *chandra*, moon.

What is the effect of sexual sublimation on the protoplasm of the body and the blood corpuscles?

If it is done in a correct manner it gives you resistance, immunity from all diseases and microbial infections.

Many yogis are able to sustain the extreme cold of the Himalayas. Is it due to sexual sublimation or yogic practices?

It is due to both sexual sublimation and pranayama practices which are gradually developed.

What about the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible?

I think that the interpretation of this story should be more esoteric. Adam is atma and Eve is jiva. They lived together in the same body and they were practically the same. What is that fruit that they ate by which they fell from the spiritual heights? It was not only sexual enjoyment; that is only one type of attachment. I think they ate the fruit of duality and then they fell from the vision of unity. Therefore, they had to go from the garden of paradise which represents spiritual unity to the world which represents suffering and duality.

Do you believe that the descent of the superrace or the superhuman being is possible in the presence of this sexual anarchy which prevails in the world?

Yes. It is going to emerge only out of that. Always remember that genius, bravery and everything great emerges from sexual anarchy. Of course, not from each and everyone, but a few great souls will come out of that. The brain matter has definitely been evolving for thousands of years. In this century people are becoming more and more psychic, in spite of the fact that in the beginning they were all criticizing the psychic system. Now people of the East and West are thinking alike on psychic laws.

How can we know who should marry and who should not?

If one has decided to make spiritual progress and to live one's life at the same time, then even if there has been a point of doubt regarding this matter, one should get into married life as seriously and as properly as one can. If one is not at all worried about spiritual progress, but just wants to live a normal life without errors, then also one should get

into the married life in a proper manner. However, if there is not a single point of doubt, one is just interested in things which concern spiritual life, such a person should not marry at all.

When one has attained samadhi, does it mean one is established in perfect brahmacharya?

Not necessarily. The sexual drive continues up to savikalpa samadhi. It is only in nirvikalpa samadhi that you can expect total sublimation of the deeper forces of man to take place and the channelled force goes up to the brain, it can't go anywhere else. Nirvikalpa samadhi cannot be attained unless one is established in savikalpa. Once you enter nirvikalpa, it is not a flash, it is an established state.

What is the meaning of complete brahmacharya?

In complete brahmacharya the nervous system does not respond at all to the sexual sensation or to the associated memory. It is something like a man who has eaten a lot and after that if you ask him, "Will you take more?" He will say, "No," because his senses do not respond to it. We call it *aptakam*, 'whose desires are completely fulfilled'. He knows everything, it is not that he is ignorant or totally abnormal, but at the same time the thought does not create any sensation in him, it does not disturb him. This knowledge does not cause him to go off the path. He knows and at the same time he moves not.

Such a state is complete brahmacharya, that is temporary and permanent both. Sometimes it goes on for years together and then on a certain day you may feel some kind of agitation and due to that agitation so many thoughts come. Then everything is calm and quiet again. Such a man knows everything, what has happened in the past also, but still he is self-satisfied. The completely fulfilled man remembers all, understands everything, but does not respond to sensations that are created by memory, by association or by other things. That is total brahmacharya.

What is the relationship between sublimation of the sexual force and awakening of the chakras?

They are two different things. Awakening of the chakras can be done without sexual sublimation.

How should students who are victims of sexual weakness be helped?

The best thing you can do is to get them in touch with yoga. Through the practices of yoga the sexual drive is brought under control. Then gradually reduce their diet. This is very important. When this is done take them into meditation.

The type of meditation depends on the individual person. Some people prefer simple meditation – give them pratyahara. Some people prefer complicated meditation – give them pratyahara, dharana, dhyana. They will find bliss in it and that bliss will make them continue with yoga for a little longer. Then they will come across certain difficulties in meditation. Now you can give them a few books to read by Sivananda or Vivekananda. All the books they have written give emphasis to brahmacharya. Ultimately, they will develop common sense and intelligence, and they will be able to decide many things for themselves in life.

Should this type of student be given vajroli?

No. You know what vajroli is? It is coitus interruptus. It is all the bliss within oneself. The whole thing is done inside through voluntary movements of the glands.

It would be better to give them yoga nidra first. Let them do the complete practice and when you come to the long visualizations, eliminate them. Instead, you have to use those symbols which will make their inner mind responsive, such as a candle flame, a saint meditating, a lotus flower, the bank of a river, a dead body. These are the things that you should put into their mind.

They can also be given preliminary practice of bandha. Moola bandha is very good and uddiyana is very useful as

vajroli takes place in that practice quite naturally. There are also a few asanas for brahmacharya such as pada angushthasana, gorakshasana and vajrasana. This is the way you have to deal with the mind. If he is passive in nature, do not teach him all these things. You can judge easily. The active type is very quick and alert. He can read your thoughts so quickly, while the passive type will tend to analyze the situation and then act.

What is yoga nidra meant for?

Yoga nidra is a treatment for your psyche. It is not meditation, it is not concentration, it is *pratyahara*, sensory withdrawal. It tranquillizes the system and it can be given to anybody. At the end of the practice we add a little item of dharana, so that we know the pratyahara is complete. When the pratyahara is complete, the conception becomes very clear, you can see the lotus in imagination or in vision. If pratyahara is not successful, not complete, then dharana will also not be complete.

Does it mean that one who is unable to succeed in yoga nidra will not succeed in meditation?

No. If you do not succeed in meditation, it means your concentration was not up to the mark or your sensory withdrawal was not up to the mark. In the last stage of yoga nidra you visualize many things. If you are able to see them clearly, it means that the entire practice was successful from the beginning. If these items do not come to your mind vividly and your mind keeps wavering even at that time, it means that you have not done the main part of the practice correctly.

How to formulate a yoga nidra for different types of students?

It is very difficult to say exactly which type of yoga nidra should be given because each person is different, but I can tell you one thing, before you try to teach the practice of

yoga nidra, you should know more about the mind itself. Make a study of the mind as a substance, as a being, as an active force. You should understand what the mind uses as energy, how it moves. The mind has a definite pattern of movements and they can be announced beforehand. If you analyze your mind, you can tell that on such and such a day you will think like that.

The mind has definite states; there is a definite law and order. If a man just sees a skeleton in a dream, you know what it is due to. A yoga teacher should learn all these things, because in yogic philosophy and in psychology the mind is dealt with in a different way. Sometimes their analysis is common and identical and at other times it differs.

What is the mind? After all, the mind is not the man. Is it a kind of thought or impression, a kind of wave or expression of the brain? Is it jealousy, anger, greed, passion, maliciousness, love, compassion, passion, desire? What is the mind? So many things are there in the mind, so you will have to study it and make a point by point analysis.

Once you come to know what the mind is and how it behaves, it will be very easy for you to teach and you will be able to tell your students what they will be thinking on a particular day. Through analysis, through feeling and through smelling also, you can know the personality. If a man has an angry nature or a criminal nature, you will be able to see it. Study of the mind is essential for the yoga teacher.

Are there any good books on brahmacharya?

Many books have been written, but most of them are very extreme. There is one book in English, *The Practice of Brahmacharya* by Swami Sivananda. That is an orthodox authority, uncharitably uncompromising. In this book Swamiji has written that one must avoid falseness in brahmacharya on eight points: one should not discuss about sex, read about sex, think about sex; one should not take meat, etc. It is a very idealistic approach.

Another book by Swamiji in Hindi, which impressed me most was *Brahmacharya hi jivan hai Bhog hi mritya hai* (Brahmacharya is Life and Enjoyment is Death). When I read this book, all night I was resolving from minute to minute, “Whatever the difficulties may be, I must do it.” I thought my whole brain had gone up, it had such a tremendous influence on my life, but even that book is very extreme.

What about Gandhiji’s book on brahmacharya?

No. Gandhiji’s life was full of political upsurges. He had very little time to think about women. He was thrown into prison many times. He used to write letters with both hands and go on dictating to Mahadev Desai at the same time. So much work he used to do. Such a great man, fully active around the clock, is it any wonder then that he could maintain brahmacharya? The penance that he took upon himself cannot be considered penance by us. We follow the penance of a sadhu who spends most of his time in calm and quiet meditation without any duty or responsibility. If that man could attain brahmacharya, I also can. Definitely brahmacharya is superior to any other path unless, of course, the nature is against it.



35

The Bhagavad Gita: An Esoteric Interpretation

Class lecture, 21 September 1967

Kurukshetra is the historic place where the great war of the *Mahabharata* was fought. In the *Bhagavad Gita* the position is this: there are two opposing forces facing each other for a final war. Arjuna is the commander-in-chief of one of the forces and Krishna is his charioteer. Arjuna orders Krishna to place the chariot in a position where he can survey both the armies, so that he can see who he has to fight. When the chariot is positioned over the battlefield, Arjuna sees on both sides all his friends and relatives ready to fight with each other. Certainly the idea of mass destruction crosses his mind and he is terrified. Therefore, Arjuna decides not to fight and he tells this to Krishna. First of all Krishna gives him some instructions and then he gives him the sermon which we know as the *Gita*.

Here we have to understand the situation in the following way. The two tendencies of the individual personality are always facing each other in the battle of life. The aspirant who wants to go high on the spiritual path and become victorious has to face the opposition and become victorious at any cost. He cannot escape it. In *Gita* the Pandavas and the Kauravas are the two forces arrayed for battle. The Pandavas represent the divine or the virtuous forces and the Kauravas represent the demonical forces, the lower forces in

man. So these two forces are facing each other and then the battle begins. In fact, the war of Mahabharata is the battle that is taking place in each and every individual. If you think that you can make a retreat and escape from the clashes of life, it is not true, it is not right. This is the central teaching of the *Gita*.

In the *Gita* it says that everyone has to fight, wherever he might be. Even one who has renounced property and position has to fight. War is sometimes external and sometimes it is completely internal. Many people do not even understand what the battle is. With the conflict that goes on incessantly in every individual from moment to moment, it is not only the mind that is fighting, even the physical cells of our body are struggling to survive. There are lower forces in the body that are trying to destroy the physical being, but there are other forces which are trying to resist and thus the life goes on.

In the same manner, there is a struggle, a conflict that goes on in the psychological plane every moment, either consciously or subconsciously. If you have no work, if you have time to think and watch this warfare, you will be surprised to see that there is not even one moment that two thoughts do not collide with each other. We have never seen such a phenomenon. Those who have time can go inside and watch their thoughts as silent witnesses. In the deeper realms of the individual being they can see the thoughts colliding and surviving and dying every moment. New thoughts are born, old thoughts die. That is the psychological warfare that takes place in each and every individual.

Apart from that, the *jiva*, the individual soul, which is bound by avidya, wants to be released. It is something like a paralyzed man who wants to get up but cannot do it. Such a person is *jiva*. He wants to transcend the limitations of mind and body, of avidya and maya, but he cannot do it. For that reason he has to fight every moment. Fight with whom? With his own *samskaras*. What are those *samskaras*? They are the demonical nature, the darker forces in man. We call them

devils or *rakshasas*. These are the forces and if the jivatman, or the individual soul, is to become free from the limitations of the mind, body and environment, the first thing he will have to do is fight a war against himself.

If there is no death in life, there is no evolution. Habits must die, thoughts must die. The thoughts which you cherished yesterday should not survive today. You should not be bound by old thoughts and habits, the most rigid weaknesses of every man. We are so accustomed to our name, our body, our religion, our habits, our culture, our ethics, to so many things. We want them to survive, but they must die. Everything in life becomes old and useless. Therefore, the individual soul has to kill, to destroy all the superimpositions. After all the foreign elements are eliminated, then the real element shines forth as powerfully as atomic energy. It is a complete division, a complete disintegration of the foreign matter of the individual personality.

So, this war is a spiritual war in which Arjuna is jivatman. This body is the chariot and this world is Kurukshetra. Who is Krishna? The Supreme Being, the Indweller of your soul, the charioteer who manages the chariot even when you are asleep. The lungs keep on moving even when you are talking, when you are thinking, the lungs go on breathing. These are some of the factors of life based on nature and the charioteer of these phenomena, of this body, is Krishna. From moment to moment, the Being beyond unconsciousness is Krishna.

The being on this side of unconsciousness is Arjuna. There is a gulf of difference between Krishna and Arjuna. Krishna instructs Arjuna. Arjuna cannot understand because his is the language of the subconscious and Krishna uses the language of the superconscious. That gulf of difference can only be filled when the individual has the inner vision of the cosmic reality during moments of inspiration and trance. Once that vision comes, the difference between superconscious and subconscious is bridged. After that the

jivatman can understand everything that the *Paramatman*, or Supreme Soul, speaks.

It is also said that the sermon of Krishna is unceasing, not only in the *Gita* but in the internal war of your life. If one has the ears to hear, the mind to understand and the power to dive deep inside, the sermon still goes on. That is the eternal sermon which has been spoken as the inner voice of the soul, as the voice from heaven which God speaks. So, in this esoteric context, we take the instructions of the *Gita* to be the eternal voice of the soul, and Arjuna to be the *jivatman* or individualized consciousness. These are the two forces in man which are well known to all of us.

Now, the arena of battle is called Kurukshetra. In Sanskrit *kuru* means ‘action’ and *kshetra* means ‘field’, the field of action. You know that this world is nothing but the field of action – either you work or you die. This is Kurukshetra, but we have added one more adjective to it – Dharmakshetra. It is not only the field of action, it is also the field of dharma. Dharma has a different meaning in Sanskrit literature and in Hindu religion, but when we speak of dharma we are not concerned with the religious meaning.

By *dharma* we mean the eternal duty, the duty which is expected of each and every individual in context with society and himself. That is called dharma. It is not religion; it is not going to the temple or church or paying obeisance; it is not keeping a mala and doing japa. All this is called spiritual life. In India we call it *adhyatma*, spiritual. A man is spiritual because he goes to the temple, but by dharma we always mean the fulfilment of duty towards oneself and the whole of creation. So, this world is also Dharmakshetra; here you can work for yourself and also for others.

The first sloka of *Gita* starts with: *Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra*. The blind king Dhritarashtra is asking his war commentator, “O Sanjaya, please tell me what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do when they assembled on the battlefield of Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra with the desire to fight?” This question is answered in the last sloka

of *Gita*. In the 698 slokas in between there is no answer to it. There is only narration. The reply which he gives at the end is, “Wherever there is Sri Krishna, the Lord of yoga and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the Gandiva bow, prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness are assured. This is my conviction.”

It also means that if one tunes one’s self to the Supreme Consciousness, but at the same time is able to maintain one’s individual consciousness like a *jivanmukta*, then prosperity, victory, glory and righteousness are assured. It means the battle will be won by that person and no one else. We have to understand from this sloka that, in order to win the battle of life, we have to attune ourselves to the Cosmic Consciousness, while maintaining the individual consciousness which we have at present. In short this is the esoteric background of the entire *Gita*. We need not concern ourselves with the historical background because we are students of yoga, not students of history.

We consider the theme of *Gita* to be a spiritual theme. We consider the dialogue of *Gita* to be a dialogue within ourselves, and we also consider that the *Gita* was primarily written only for spiritual aspirants and not as a historical epic. Therefore, at the end of every chapter it is written, “And now in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, in the Upanishad, in the Brahmailidya, in the yoga shastra, in the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, we finish the second chapter on Samkhya yoga,” or “we finish the third chapter on karma yoga.” This is the last line of *Gita* in every chapter. It means: *Gita* is Brahmailidya, *Gita* is Upanishad, *Gita* is yoga shastra; it is not just a part of history.

Gita is not a book of morals. It is a book of Upanishads. It is not a book on religion, it is a book on Brahmailidya. It is not a book on history, it is a yoga shastra. Upanishad means ‘a close dialogue between guru and disciple’. When the secret doctrines or instructions are imparted by the guru to a few disciples who are very close, that set of instructions is known as Upanishad. The word *Upanishad* literally means

‘to sit close by’. In the olden days when the guru wanted to impart certain important and secret doctrine, he did it in this way and therefore the instructions came to be known as the Upanishads.

Gita is Upanishad in the sense that Lord Krishna imparted the teaching to Arjuna and nobody else heard it. There were thousands and thousands of soldiers on the battlefield, but they did not know what was taking place between these two blessed souls. Only the divine Sanjaya overheard the entire conversation and then narrated it to Dhritarashtra. Therefore, this is a dialogue between two persons who are intimate with each other and so it is Upanishad.

Gita is Brahmaavidya. What does it mean? *Vidya* means ‘knowledge’ and *Brahma* means ‘Supreme Being’, knowledge of the Supreme Being. What are the ways and means of experiencing the Supreme Reality? How do we come nearer to Him? Do we reach Him through ethical life? Do we reach Him through discipline? Or do we reach Him, understand Him, or experience Him through austerity, through bhakti, through karma, through jnana or by purification and so on? What is the way?

Therefore, *Gita* is Brahmaavidya because here we find different discussions rallying around the knowledge of the Supreme Being. *Gita* may talk about charity, about renunciation, about tapas or austerity, about sadhana and yoga, but the main subject matter of *Gita* is the knowledge of the Supreme, so it is Brahmaavidya. Vidya actually means ‘personal knowledge’. It is not theoretical knowledge of places and things. It is intimate knowledge gained through experience, experience of Brahman. In Sanskrit the word *Brahman* means ‘a fact without end’, ‘a being which is beyond all geographical and mathematical conceptions’. Brahman comes from the root word *brihan* which means ‘to extend’, ‘to become infinite’.

Gita is yoga shastra. *Yoga shastra* means ‘order’; it does not mean scripture as it is generally translated. Whenever we use

the word shastra in English they translate it as scripture, but etymologically the word *shastra* means 'that which gives you a certain order to fulfil'. You are ordered to act in a particular way and that is shastra. Yoga shastra is a book of instructions on yoga.

What is yoga? *Yoga* is union, joining, togetherness, two things becoming one, three things becoming one, a number of things becoming one. Multiplicity or diversity fusing into unity is the process of yoga. Many rivers starting from different sources all end in one ocean. The mental activities, the physical activities are fused in one purpose and therefore it is yoga. Yoga means 'union'.

The entire *Gita* deals with the unity of the individual soul, individual consciousness, with the Cosmic Soul or Cosmic Consciousness. You will find that the main hero, Arjuna, was deluded. He was not aware of the true facts of spiritual life. He did not know spiritual life at all. He was a great military man, a commander-in-chief. He was a powerful, influential man of great learning and valour. All that is true, but in spite of that, he did not know the reality of life after life. He was deluded and the moment he faced the great armies in front of him, he thought that there was no life hereafter. He made a great mistake. He thought that he was the person behind the entire act of killing and murdering, and he was under other delusions. Lord Krishna rent all these delusions and brought him nearer to the Supreme Reality that was within his own self.

Therefore, *Gita* is known as Upanishad, Brahnavidya and yoga shastra. It is the eternal dialogue. You may read *Gita* from the book, but you can also hear the same sermon within your own self at all moments. Before coming to the final conclusions of the *Gita* so far as life is concerned, we should wait, because the *Gita's* approach is practical and it is not idealistic. You must have heard of a great book called the *Yoga Vasishtha*. Its approach to life is idealistic. The approach to life in the *Ramayana* is idealistic, Upanishadic life is also idealistic, Buddhist life is idealistic, yogic life is also

idealistic, but the approach of the *Gita* is absolutely realistic. You consider life as something concrete and you tackle the problems in life as they stand in front of you. You do not follow too much the idealistic patterns of thought as given to you by your parents, by your society and by your religion, and that is the challenge.

In India many people consider that the *Gita* is a book for sannyasins. About twenty years back it was so difficult for us to give this book to householders. They would never read it. They would say if anyone reads the *Gita*, it should be a sannyasin. Then a great man came, Lokmanya Tilak, and he spoke about the *Gita* to the people for the first time. Then Mahatma Gandhi came and a few others. They presented commentaries on the *Gita* and people came to know that the *Gita* was not only for sannyasins, but for householders, for people of the world, there was not a better guidebook than the *Gita* because the *Gita* deals with the practical problems of life with a spiritual background and with a worldly rod. It tackles the problems of the lower mind, but with a higher purpose.



36

The Guru-Disciple Relationship

21 September 1967

What is the relationship between guru and disciple? What are their main duties towards each other?

In his book called *Guru and Disciple* Swami Sivananda says that the main occupation of a guru is to find out ways of elevating the spiritual aspirant and the definition of a disciple is one who is prepared to serve and obey the guru, to practise self-purification; one who is receptive to knowledge and learning. The word *shishya* is derived from the root 'to learn', 'to be educated'. The word *guru* has two meanings: 'one who is heavy or great', 'one who removes the darkness of *avidya*, ignorance'.

The relationship between guru and disciple is deeper than all other relations known so far: man and wife, friend and friend, master and servant. The duty of a guru is to think about the spiritual welfare of his disciple and the duty of the disciple is to be of service to the guru and to learn from life. The guru has to teach his disciple all kinds of sadhana. The disciple practises and when he has mastered them the guru gives him more practices to do. Guru can guide the evolution of the disciple and put him on the correct path.

It is no use just saying that you are the disciple and I am the guru; the relationship has to be established correctly. Guru

is always necessary for those who want to climb the higher spiritual path. If they want to follow the path of meditation, they must have a raja yoga guru. If they want to transcend through the path of karma yoga, they must have a karma yoga guru. If they wish to evolve through bhakti yoga, they must have a bhakti yoga guru and if they want to progress through jnana yoga, they should seek a vedantin guru.

It is said in the Upanishads that there are two types of guru: one who is learned, who knows scriptures, Vedas, etc., and one who is always established within his own self. These are the two types, a learned guru and a self-realized guru, but one who has realized himself is always greater than one who is merely learned.

How should one choose a guru?

Guru has to be chosen with a background of faith. Those who are faithful will find a guru; those who are not, will not find a guru. Those who look for the performance of miracles and other powers and choose a guru accordingly will be disillusioned. A person who performs miracles is usually not a guru. Gurus do not perform miracles for they are beyond the psychic plane, high up on the spiritual plane, where they never exhibit *siddhis*, powers.

Whenever you want to choose a guru, you must approach with a pure heart and a pure unselfish faith, then you will get a true guru. If you search for money, you will get money; if you search for apples, you will get apples. It all depends on the background of your consciousness. If you go with pure heart and faith, then only the true guru can come to you, but if you go with a selfish purpose and ignorant background, then those who can display miracles will attract you and after some time you will be disillusioned.

The love the guru and the disciple feel is pure love, like the love which one feels for one's mother, but it is even greater than that. The wife can live without the husband, and the husband without the wife, but the true guru and disciple never feel that they are two; the notion of duality disappears.

A great Sufi saint once said, "I see my guru in all faces," and then added, "No, no, I see no faces, only my guru." On transcending duality, guru and disciple see each other face to face. All notions of guru being pure or impure are abolished and unity takes place. Then the spiritual personality is lost. Just as Ramakrishna was so concerned about his disciple Vivekananda that he used to wait for him at the gate, so the guru should take care of his disciples.

Does the guru search for the disciple or does the disciple search for the guru?

In certain cases the guru searches, but in others the disciple has to search. When the guru wants a disciple, he searches, and when the disciple wants a guru, he has to search. Sometimes a guru has a mission to fulfil. He may receive a message from high in the spiritual world. When the disciples are revealed to him he searches in order to find those disciples, but the vision is not always clear. Sometimes only the figure is seen, but not the name of the disciple and vice-versa.

How does the disciple surrender himself to the guru?

When a person has decided that spiritual life is the aim or destiny, then he begins to look for a guru. The surrender of the disciple to the guru is not like the surrender of a servant or a war prisoner, but once the disciple has surrendered, he knows it. This means the complete surrender of himself, of his personality.

What is the guru most concerned with in the development of the disciple?

There are certain worldly aspects in the disciple with which the guru is not concerned. Guru is only concerned with one thing – that the disciple has to leave him one day, that is all. Heart, mind, intellect may be there, but one thing has to go and that is the ego. When that happens, guru feels one with the disciple and sees no difference.

What makes one want to surrender?

This quality is in us and it is in the guru also, but it has to be manifested. You see, everybody wants to surrender, for there is pleasure in losing oneself and there is nobody in the world who does not want to lose themselves. There is bliss and great ecstasy in losing oneself. This losing of oneself is not like death. It is passing over the threshold into higher experience.

How do we know when it is time to seek a guru?

When the time comes either the guru will come to you or you will come to the guru.

Do guru and disciple come together in different births?

When guru and disciple are related from previous births, they have got to be together in the next birth also. They may miss one birth in between, but they have to meet again. You will always keep the same guru, but there can be some exceptions.

Is it possible to meet one's guru in dream?

A disciple may see his guru in dream, even if he has not yet seen him in his physical form. Then he has to search for this form seen in the dream.

Where does mantra come from?

Mantra is not from guru, but is an expression of the subconscious. Mantra can be received from the guru if one has a living guru, but if you do not have a living guru, whatever you see in dreams is an expression of the subconscious. If a person has a very powerful and pure soul, then he could contact Swami Sivananda's departed spirit and get a mantra also. Otherwise it is the expression of the subconscious. So, one should analyze oneself well to find out where things come from.

Can one take mantra from a person whom one does not consider as one's guru?

Mantra should be taken from a guru, only then does it become effective. A guru is the one from whom you take a mantra. This is the first form of contact between guru and disciple. Later on the disciple may wish to have another mantra and to change the old one, but as a matter of fact, the mantra should never be changed, nor should the guru be changed. That is the rule everywhere. People have been changing the guru because they are used to changing everything in life.

What is initiation?

Mantra initiation is the giving of mantra; kriya yoga initiation is the teaching of kriya yoga; sannyasa initiation is making one renounce all worldly attachments, but the guru does not transmit any power unless there is the capacity to hold it. Eighty percent of gurus can pass over some magnetic powers to their disciples, but that can upset the disciple's mental and nervous equilibrium as has happened in many cases. It is something like an electric shock which can break down the serenity of the mental atmosphere in the aspirant. Sometimes emotional aspirants may even go crazy. Therefore, the guru cannot pass on powers by mantras, etc., unless he finds that the aspirant is very strong.

When does the guru give higher initiations? What are the necessary qualifications of the disciple?

Sometimes the guru chooses the disciple and at other times the disciple chooses the guru. The guru has many aspiring disciples, a few missionary disciples and only one chief disciple. *Diksha* means 'initiation', the desire to give mantra, spiritual lessons, kriya yoga or sannyasa. There are higher initiations also, but they are never given unless the mind and body of the disciple are completely steady. For instance, when the guru transfers his spiritual power before leaving the body or earthly role, different powers are transmitted to

different people and that must be done with great care. The first thing the guru has to make sure of is that the disciple's mind will not shake at any moment. Even if you cut off his nose, pierce his eyes, shoot him with a revolver or throw him into the Ganga, he is always steady minded and unaffected.

If you become like that, perhaps you will be thrice blessed. So, the transfer of psychic powers, spiritual powers, of traditional knowledge is always given to a disciple whose mind has lost every point of worldly and lower sensitivity, which is unreceptive to lower reflexes, but open to higher ones. When the lower sphere of mind is paralyzed, but the higher sphere is sensitive, then the higher initiations are given and that is what everybody is looking for.

How is initiation imparted? What is the significance of the different rituals?

Everything that is imparted at the spiritual level must have an operator and a medium. The guru is the operator and the disciple is the medium. Suppose I give you a mantra. If you accept the mantra then you are a disciple. If you are not a disciple then you will never accept it. During mantra initiation we use fire because fire is a symbol of light and consciousness, of instinctive consciousness developed into intellectual consciousness and then into intuitive consciousness. Kundalini is the fire; intellect and intuition are the manifestations. Instinct, intellect and intuition; one develops from the other, and fire is the symbol of the manifestation and transition of these great forces.

Initiation may be imparted anywhere: on the bank of a river, underneath a green tree, in a temple or chapel, in a lonely forest, in an ashram or in a small room, but at the time of initiation everything must be quiet. The body must be still; it should not shake, because when the body shakes, the lungs and the heart speed up, the breath and the circulation are quickened as well as the cerebral vibrations. There are different kinds of ritual initiation. For example, Parsis use water and fire, Christians use water, Hindus use

fire and flowers. Different people use different elements suitable to their own psyche.

So, when you accept a mantra, you become a disciple, then you practise that mantra and thus you strengthen the guru-disciple relationship. Once this is established, then you become a channel for the guru's thoughts, which is called mediumship. Disciple is the medium and guru is the operator. His thoughts are conducted through you.

Can initiation be imparted by letter?

Initiation can be imparted by letter by great yogis like Swami Sivananda. Even poisonous snake bites can be removed by letter, but not all can do it.

Does a sannyasin participate in any religious rituals?

A sannyasin should not prostrate before any deity, but he should do everything that aims towards self-purification. He should be secular, not belonging to any particular religion, but if he wants to go into a temple or church and pray there or do anything that purifies the mind, he is free to do so. Fire sacrifice, charity and austerity should be done by the sannyasin, even if it is not written in the books.

At what age should one start using the mantra?

As soon as one realizes that the mantra is beneficial for the body, mind and soul, and that by regular practice one's relationship with the guru can continue unabated to the end of life with unselfishness. Whatever path of yoga you follow, whether hatha yoga, raja yoga, karma yoga or jnana yoga, you must have a mantra.

In India previously the practices of sandhya were given to the child at the age of eight. These practices included *Gayatri* mantra, surya namskara and nadi shodhana, which were to be performed three times a day up to the age of twenty-five. Then one was given the personal mantra. Even husband and wife were given mantra by the guru. After living married life for many years, when the man wished to devote himself to

spiritual life, then the guru gave him diksha into esoteric knowledge and practices. Then he started meditation.

In which way can one get self-realization without a guru?

When one is as evolved as Ramana Maharshi was then one can get self-realization without a guru.

How can we remain in contact with the guru and receive his guidance?

There are very few chief disciples, but there are many aspirants who may also be great sadhakas. Some of them just do sadhana to attain self-realization, while others get a glimpse of the guru's mission and join him in the work. If disciples are regular in their meditation, then they can always contact the guru and draw upon his unconscious help and guidance. One derives maximum benefits from one's guru when one is regular in meditation and sadhana. It is not the conscious mind of the guru that responds, but the unconscious, because there we are all interconnected and interrelated with each other, thus permitting communion of thought and feeling. I know when a disciple has gone wrong and when a calamity is going to befall him, because we are all interrelated.

Can the guru change the disciple's destiny?

It all depends upon his capacity. Of course, if the guru is more capable he can fight with your destiny or karma, but everybody has his own limitations and capacities.

Is there any difference between a monk and a sannyasin?

A monk is a sannyasin. Both belong to the same order. They have renounced worldly relations and ties.

What is the ideal and goal of a sannyasin?

In India, according to all traditions the ideal of a sannyasin is to keep on moving for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of the many; to help in the fulfilment of his spiritual ideal, by reminding him or by infusing in him a spiritual

teaching. For that, first you must practise renunciation, austerities and free the mind.

What are the duties of a sannyasin?

During peacetime the sannyasins are asked to preach the esoteric, spiritual science. During periods of national turmoil and trouble, they are asked to switch over to national discipline and unity. Then sannyasins take vows which are never to be spoken or written, but which are said before the guru in absolute privacy.

What are the restrictions of a sannyasin?

Mainly, sannyasins are asked to refrain from the unreal and have faith in the real. Of course, there are many restrictions from cult to cult. Some sannyasins cannot touch fire, money, sweets, meat, etc. Some must have long hair, others must be shaved, but these are the nonessentials, depending on circumstances, culture, weather, temperament and so on. However, all the sannyasins of the Dashnami order of Shankaracharya, which is the largest and most organized order in India, wear geru cloth.

Sannyasins are known as swamis, because *swami* means ‘master of oneself’. One who has self-mastery is called swami. Usually a swami has attained mastery over himself, but he may not have mastered all aspects of life. In the past ladies were not initiated into the sannyasin order, there is no tradition as such, but now they can be.

How are statements about the future given to humanity?

They are given in the form of prophecies. Unwritten prophecies are given to us, we learn them by heart and then give them to our disciples. These prophecies always come true. I may tell my disciple, “That man will become your disciple; you will have so many disciples. That shall be the work you have to do.” Whatever will happen is all given in a clear-cut prophecy. Every tradition has a prophecy which is usually handed down from generation to generation.

Once the prophecy for a certain tradition is given, how is it perpetuated?

In between there is a revealed guru. You see, Shankaracharya established an order. After his death a great man came, a sannyyasin. He had certain glimpses into the future and revealed them to his chief disciples. Then his chief disciples started a sect in order to perpetuate the tradition so that it would not be forgotten. That was how it was passed on and that is why gurus want perfect and permanent disciples; not many, but one who is capable of maintaining the tradition and passing it on.

Exactly at the time when the prophecy comes to an end, another great man, not politically but spiritually great, comes and reveals something new for the generations to come. He gives it to his disciples who then organize themselves and go on propagating it. That is what happens everywhere in every tradition, not only in Hinduism, but even in the Bible many prophecies are written, but because they were not properly perpetuated, a lot of them have been absolutely lost.

How are prophecies given?

They should always be given orally so that things remain untampered by scholars and intellectuals. We don't want scholars and intellectuals to tamper with it or politicians to read it. If they know what is to come, they will exploit it. Nor do we want politicians to become our disciples. Of course, if they come to us, we cannot help it, but we don't try to make them our disciples. Usually disciples will not become politicians, at least not in my case, because I am aware of the events.

Have many scientists been working in yogic domains?

Yes, they have, but they cannot come to any final conclusions. Perhaps if they could, then all the secrets of yoga would be revealed to the public. However, it is not possible, even for a spiritual scientist, because for every secret in spiritual science, the guru is essential. Practice is needed under the

guidance of a guru. You cannot really practise with a book, it is very difficult. Even padmasana has to be learned from a guru, unless it is well explained with pictures, but kriya yoga is out of the question; it cannot be shown in pictures. Of course, anything can be done, but personal teaching from the guru is best, because one understands more easily that way.

What is the best sadhana for the future generation?

According to all the revelations, the best sadhana for the future generations and the coming age is repetition of God's name. That is the sadhana that the coming generation is going to use. Very few people are practising kriya yoga, but what about the thousands and thousands of masses? As it is said in the Bible, Koran and other scriptures, people must remember and sing God's name while observing devotion for him. This practice will bring good results to the practitioner and to others as well. This is going to be the greatest yoga, the common yoga.

There has always been the yoga for the few; they are the privileged ones, the yoga teachers, the acharyas. If I were to pick up a man from the street and teach him kriya yoga, he would start crying; he would start thinking that the walls are crumbling or the mountain is breaking apart. Not everybody can do higher practices. It has been said that the people in the coming age will become restless, greedy, passionate and they will not find peace in anything, but if they practise repetition of the Lord's name they will find peace.

What is the role of women in the future?

Many ashrams have women leaders, main disciples and donors because women are very intuitive and more inclined towards spiritual things than men. In the future the different cults are going to knit together in a common bond of friendship, with one aim, to remove disparity and inequality from all spheres of life as far as possible. Not only financial inequality, but racial inequality, religious inequality and also

national inequality. All these have to be reduced and ladies will champion the cause. We will help them, even in their household affairs, as we have been helping them by getting money from outside.

Why were ladies not initiated?

Ladies were not initiated, that is true, but that was during a period of invasions and that was not a permanent dharma. If ladies were not to be initiated, how did so many women become yogis? You see, in ancient times the situation was different. Ladies were even permitted to accompany their husbands onto the battlefield, but now they are not. In England, one century back, when the first two ladies became typists and were employed in an office, they were put into a room and asked to type out the letters and drop them out through a pigeonhole. The officer in charge locked the room from outside. It is a fact and when they went to the office they wore high collars over the throat and long skirts which covered their ankles; nothing should be visible. Now, in England, ladies can go anywhere, there are no such restrictions. Education has improved and also the fundamental beliefs of the community.



37

Mind and Meditation

22 September 1967

What is the definition of a good and a bad action?

There is no ultimate definition of a good and bad action. Anything a man does should be done for the good of many people, but if you think that the higher mind always thinks high thoughts and the lower mind always thinks lower thoughts, that is not so. Sometimes the higher mind will leave the house or destroy the property. Sometimes the lower mind is more capable, practical and realistic than the higher mind. The approach of the higher mind to problems is idealistic, whereas the lower mind is impatient, it wants to see immediate results.

Therefore, you will find that the person with a lower mind is always more successful than the higher minded person. The lower mind is realistic – three plus three makes six. If it sees an elephant, it thinks, “Oh, this is an elephant, it has a trunk”, but the higher mind will think, “It may or may not have a trunk, our eyes are focused that way so we see a trunk.” That is how the idealistic mind thinks and functions, but a realistic mind thinks that there is a trunk, whether it is due to the focusing of your eyes or the trunk in fact. Then shoot it and finish it off.

Neither the higher mind nor the lower mind is immortal. They are conditions of mind that depend on

individual training. After all, we cannot fix which particular characteristics belong to the higher mind and which belong to the lower mind. The lower mind has the capacity of analyzing things through reason and intellect. The higher mind decides things intuitively. The lower minded person thinks how to benefit himself and the higher minded person thinks for himself and for others as well.

I will tell you a true story to illustrate. A boy of sixteen years went to live with a swami. The boy was very bad. He went to the pictures every day and did all sorts of things, even stealing from his father's pocket. He was sent to the swami, who was a very good mahatma, for correction, but the mahatma used to view things from a different angle, because the higher mind was functioning. So, the boy would go to the pictures and return to the mahatma. When the mahatma asked where he had been, the boy would reply, "Swami, I have been to satsang." Then the mahatma would ask, "Are you telling the truth?" and the boy would reply, "Oh yes."

Later on the boy started going to prostitutes and he went from bad to worse. Ultimately he stole all the valuables which the mahatma kept in his house and went somewhere to spend the money. Again he returned to the mahatma and told him, "I beg your pardon. I won't commit it again." I happened to be there at that time and I asked the mahatma, "What is the matter?" He said, "The boy will be all right," because the higher mind was functioning. I said, "No. What is the use? Has he made any improvement? Either you return him to his father or you give him to me. I will take charge of him."

The mahatma agreed, so I asked the boy, "Will you come with me?" He said, "Yes", knowing that I belonged to a very big ashram and thinking that perhaps he would have so many chances to do mischief there. I said, "All right, bring your things." At six o'clock in the morning I asked where the boy was. The servant boy said he was in the tea shop. So, I went there, pulled him out by the legs and threw him into the Ganga. I said, "The next time I see you in a tea shop I will break your head, remember it." We took him out of the

Ganga and put him under lock and key for three days. He was starving and he said, "Swamiji, I promise I will never commit any mischief again." I said, "That is not enough", because the lower mind was still functioning.

So, I gave him a department in the post office and I saw how efficient he was. I put him in marketing and he was always calculating and comparing the prices. I put him in the petty cash and every moment he was checking the cash. After a few weeks he left the ashram and returned to his home. He went to college and got his degree. Several years ago I met him and he had become the leader of his whole town. He still did the same things, but now he was able to direct his affairs in a more positive way because the higher mind was functioning along with the lower mind.

There is another story in the Mahabharata. During the last phase of the war, Arjuna and his unknown stepbrother Karna, who was born to Arjuna's mother Kunti before her marriage, were fighting on the battlefield, each one for a different army. Suddenly Karna's chariot would not move because something was wrong with the wheels. So, when he got down to repair it, Arjuna stopped shooting. That is the dharma, when a man has no weapons, no defences, one should not kill him. At that moment however, Krishna asked Arjuna, "What are you doing?" Arjuna replied, "He has no weapon, so I cannot kill him now." Krishna said, "What do you mean? Now is the time. Finish him." Arjuna had to obey.

Karna said, "This is not dharma. You know I have no weapon." Then Krishna laughed and said, "Yes, now you remember dharma, when the calamity falls on your head, but when the queen was being stripped naked in a public place, at that time did you remember the dharma? When all of you conspired together to burn the five brothers in the wax house, did you remember the dharma? When you poisoned Bhima and threw him in the river without the knowledge of anybody, did you remember the dharma? And, when the calamity falls on your head, you remember the dharma!"

Karna did not know what to do. He could not repair his chariot. He got up, fought and was killed. Krishna said, "Practise dharma with those who practise dharma. There is no use in practising virtue with a person who does not want to practise it."

So, these are the functions of the lower mind and the higher mind. One should know when to use the forces of the higher mind and when to use the forces of the lower mind. When the higher mind does not know how to function, it is always taken over by the lower mind. If the higher mind wants to exist in its own higher spheres and does not want to become subservient to the lower mind, it has to act in a certain manner. How it has to act is a very difficult thing to understand and many people do not know this. They are always carried away by their emotions and the higher mind loses ground when it is under the sway of these dominant emotions.

So, with a saint you should behave like a saint; with your mother you must behave like a son; with your wife or husband you must behave like a husband or wife. When a man is coming to your house with a definite purpose to do some harm, then you must behave with him accordingly and you must protect yourself. This is the dharma. But if a man comes to your house intending to do you some wrong and you do not stop him, if he gives you a slap on the right cheek and you show him your left cheek also, that is not dharma. That has never been done.

How can one develop the faculty of discrimination?

In order to develop the faculty of discrimination, one must keep oneself in touch with the great ones. In jnana yoga, the first qualifications are *viveka*, discrimination, and *vairagya*, detachment. If one wishes to develop the faculty of discrimination, then one should study the analytical scriptures and after that one should develop the faculty of contemplation and thinking. Only after that preparation will the faculty of discrimination develop.

I have read that there are different purushas which manifest during higher meditation. Could you please explain the significance of these?

According to the ancient thinkers, there are different beings or personalities which manifest in us. One of these is black in colour. In Sanskrit that being is known as Papa Purusha. *Papa* means 'sin' and *purusha* means 'being' or 'personality'; you can say astral being, cosmic being, spiritual being, physical being. That personality, or that part of your being, where the sins or sin complexes are stored, is one personality called Papa Purusha. It has a black colour and it looks very ugly. At the moment of higher meditation, before the different purushas manifest, you always come across a black man who dashes himself out of your body. It is a very common experience. Please do not be afraid if it happens to you.

That is one purusha, no doubt, but there are many different personalities also in addition to that one. The Cosmic Being is one, the Ultimate Being is another one, but with all that, we have to admit that we have a physical being, a mental being and a psychic being. *Puru* means 'city' and *purusha* means 'he who sleeps in the city'. This body is like a city; it has nine gates. In this city there are many purushas – black men, golden men, copper men, colourless men and so on. The head or the chief of all these is called *Nirbija Purusha*, the unqualified being. He is the presiding deity.

This is an important point. When you go high up in meditation, you will meet all kinds of beings coming out of your body at different times. They are the different aspects of your personality. So, first you come to the black purusha – that is your sinful aspect. Then you have the red purusha called Lohitaksha Purusha. *Lohitaksha* means 'supreme attachment to the world'. It is in red colour which signifies supreme attachment. That is one aspect of your being.

Then comes the white purusha which signifies absolute, without taint, colourless, innocent. Then comes the copper purusha which is a symbol of deeper spiritual inclinations.

Copper colour represents strength, effulgence, depth, serenity. It is very bright, but not so bright red. It is full of lustre and very pleasing, the colour of dynamism and depth in yoga. So, copper or geru colour is used in sadhana. When the copper colour manifests in the aura, it means that the person has really become spiritual.

These are the different aspects of human life and every aspect has a different colour: red, blue, violet, yellow, green, etc. These colours are related to the subtle or the astral body, so they only change when there is a permanent change in the attitude. Blue purusha signifies a disease complex, one who always thinks that he is ill. He may not really be ill, but he just feels like that. Violet purusha signifies a person who is greatly depressed, whose body is full of toxins. It is not a good colour. Violet purusha is as bad as black purusha. Yellow is a very good colour, but it signifies that the person is weak in mind, emotional and sentimental. Silver is the same as white and as high as copper. Green is the same as yellow but deeper.

Is there any difference between the coloured purushas and the aura?

The colour of the aura is different to the colour of the purushas. The aura is always there, but the purushas can only be seen at the time of meditation, because they are the sum total of one's being. In everyone there are many purushas: red purusha, black purusha, white purusha, but the aura is only one, not several.

What other types of beings are encountered during meditation?

During meditation we meet certain persons and gods, these are also called purushas. They come to us, not only purushas, but women also, whom we meet in meditation and who have different colours. There are dark, ugly, hideous ones who you want to avoid and there are nice, beautiful ones who you want to meet.

What should we do when we meet beings during our meditation practice?

Whatever you decide now will not happen there because this conscious mind will not be functioning. At that time your inner consciousness will be functioning.

Are there both men and women purushas?

Actually it is all the same. However, when males meditate they visualize the black aspect of the personality, the darker deeper aspect. When females meditate they see golden beings, beautiful beings. The lower form is a dark and hideous man with a long nose, big ears and eyes, and then it becomes more beautiful. I am a man and he is a man and there is no attraction; that is understood by this conscious mind. Then the female aspect of my personality may emerge. When it emerges, at first it may be hideous, though finally it becomes a golden and beautiful woman. At that time I will think according to my thoughts and wishes.

If I am not a man, but I am a woman and I see the dark purusha, I will dislike it, but if I see a beautiful man, I will like it. This is the natural way. It even happens in the subconscious states. These are the aspects of your personality: the grosser, the fine, the finest and these manifestations are bound to take place if one continues meditation. If one does not continue to meditate it will not happen.

Does the black purusha always come first?

No. It may not come out first. It may come out later, but if that aspect of the personality is very small, if it is not strong, then it can come out even at the beginning. The order is not grossest, gross, fine, finest. Anything may come out at any time. It is a vision, but a deeper one. A vision is when you see something in front of your eyes, but here you see deeper and clearer than a vision. You don't know that you are seeing it inside. You feel that something is coming out of your body and you are shocked at times, you get a fright

for a moment, but in spiritual life you have to experience it. The personality, the gross, darker aspects have got to come out. Whatever path you take, whether raja yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga or karma yoga, you will meet the same experience, but not always in the form of those visions. You will find yellow, violet and red qualities also coming to you. It is something very mysterious, unknown and complex.

How is the personality influenced by karma?

Your personality is the result of karma. If you had no karma, how could you have a personality? Karma is not only action, it is the samskara, the impressions which influence the behaviour and all that. If you are angry with someone and you express your anger then that is the exhaustion of one of your complexes making yourself lighter, but of course you have to control yourself, just as you eat to keep the body fit, but you are also asked to eat with control. So, that is how the mental being is controlled in both ways.

Whatever behaviour you express, it is an expression of your own self and the sooner it comes out, the better it is for you. When you express it, you remember that it has to be controlled. It has to come out in a controlled manner so that it does not create an explosive reaction in your mind. At times the thing reacts on your whole personality again, creating another samskara, and that you have to exhaust. The explosion takes place and again the mind reacts, creates another karma, thus a chain is created. In order to finish it, you have to explode the karmas in a controlled manner so that everything is exhausted, having no reaction on the mind.

How can the capacity of thinking be developed?

The capacity of thinking can be developed in different ways. The way of developing spiritual thinking is not the same as the way of developing worldly thinking. If you want to develop spiritual thinking side by side with worldly thinking in order to succeed in life and be able to make

correct decisions, there are many ways. The first thing is that you should have infinite confidence in yourself. Once you have developed the quality of viveka and you decide something in your mind, you should not change it, whatever happens to you. That is the first thing for developing the capacity of thinking to a maximum infinite confidence! Such people become very good thinkers and still remain good disciples.

Which is the better path, karma or jnana?

Meditation is a quicker path, but karma is surer. However, real meditation is very difficult. To meditate for one second you have to prepare for many years. Meditation is that state where self-awareness has dawned, the body becomes calm and quiet, you are not aware of anything outside, no sound is heard, nothing is felt, but still you are awake inside. The form on which you are meditating affects you inside, because actual vision is the state where all the samskaras are washed away. Meditation is the way to destroy the samskaras. To come to the stage of meditation is a great achievement. Once it is achieved, you don't need to work for samadhi; that comes automatically.

What is the state of meditation? How is it experienced?

This is not thinking or seeing. It is a state of inner perception without the help of the five senses: eyes, ears, nose, touch and taste. These are paralyzed temporarily. Sensation does not take place through the medium of the five senses. Body awareness is not there. You forget your name. You don't even know who you are, but there is another awareness, of one thing, the symbol, and that awareness is more clear than external awareness, as you are seeing me now.

That is the real vision, the inner perception. It continues for three or four minutes, or just for a moment, as if you are in a new world altogether. The consciousness there is exactly the same as it is here. There is no difference, but there are

different dimensions and degrees. During meditation, if you place a fragrant rose before the nose, you will not smell it, so that is a different field of experience altogether. The consciousness there expands gradually as it does here. When you were a baby, you were the same person as you are now, but your consciousness was low. Now it has developed and in twenty years it will be still more developed. Just as there is gradual expansion of consciousness in the waking state, so it is in the inner state.

When your meditation becomes successful, on the first day you will not experience everything as clearly and with as much reality as now. At that time things will appear dim, but with the passage of time and practice of meditation day after day, the inner consciousness will expand and the more it expands, the more you become aware of inner objects, in the same way as you become aware of outer objects here. You will see a light there in the same manner as you have seen it here. You can see it, touch it and if anyone says it is a hallucination, you will say that it is not, it is real. So, the experience in that plane is something like the experience in the material plane. That is the state of meditation, but ultimately that also has to be diminished.

When that consciousness expands to the degree of material consciousness, when the difference between the spiritual and material experience is no more, both are seemingly alike, at that time you must stop that stage or it stops by itself and then samadhi takes place. About this I cannot say much. It is altogether another field of consciousness. There you don't see things coming and going because you understand and imagine the form of consciousness. The condition of consciousness is absolutely different. You don't know what you are thinking at that time, you don't know you are acting at that time because all your senses are paralyzed. You cannot employ them. No experience, no knowledge will take place through your *indriyas*, your senses, and no awareness of the physical body. You are looking inside as if in a dream, a vision.

Is it necessary to have a symbol for meditation and how shall we choose one which is suitable for us?

According to Patanjali, you must have a symbol of your choice. In bhakti yoga it is said you must select a form which you can easily love, which draws your consciousness to it like a magnet. You can hold your mind on such a symbol without any difficulty. Many people take the sky or light as their symbol, but they find it very difficult to hold the consciousness there, because in order to hold the consciousness, one needs something strong.

Anything can be used as a symbol. There is no harm if you take a symbol which is not your special liking and choice, but it will not help you very much. Whatever symbol you take up, you will succeed; it only takes a little more time, there is no question of failure. The only thing is that if the symbol is properly chosen you will succeed earlier. Everyone has their own symbol and you must find it out. Whatever symbol you choose, it should be only one.

Why, when we are meditating on Shiva, sometimes we see Krishna or Devi?

When aspirants meditate on Shiva and perceive Krishna, this means that their deeper attachment is for Krishna. When they see Devi, it means they have attachment for worldly things, because Devi is the giver of gifts and worldly benefits. The trishul is a symbol of our personality and it reminds us of Shiva. The shivalingam is also a symbol of Shiva.

In India the women worship Krishna and the men worship Devi. That is considered to be right and proper. You will also find that Shiva is liked very much by householders, whereas the sannyasins who belong to the order say “Sri Ram” before starting their meditation. Shiva is the lord of austerity and vigour, of those who live a difficult life in the jungle, but still householders love and worship him, and they get peace of mind through this. Rama was a king whose life was full of riches and luxuries, and that theme gives peace to the minds of those who lead a life of austerity.

Householders are usually living a life of enjoyment and their inner subconscious mind wants relief from that. So, the conception of Lord Shiva comes to them because he is the lord of austerities – no worries, anxieties, husbands, nothing of that sort, no trouble at all. He spends all the twenty-four hours in meditation; no fear of snakes, scorpions and tigers. He doesn't have to pay any taxes. What a free life he lives. Therefore, the concept of Shiva gives relief to the inner psychology of householders. If you are worldly, you must choose a deity who is not worldly. If you are sick, choose a healthy deity. Sannyasins lead a life of rigour and discipline, self-abnegation and mortification, therefore Rama gives them some sort of relief.

What is the process of meditation in jnana?

In jnana yoga, meditation without thought leads to realization of *tattva* or essence. The meaning becomes clear to you. Otherwise the process in jnana yoga is slower; knowledge comes first, then contemplation. You go to a guru and hear a particular truth and then you meditate and contemplate on it. The thought process continues unabated; you go on thinking point by point ceaselessly. You forget everything around you, like a scientist mulling over problems. That is called *nididhyasana*, the pose of meditation, and when the process is complete the meaning becomes clear to you.

Before coming to that path, the aspirant should have four qualifications: *vairagya*, detachment, *viveka*, discrimination, *satsanga*, spiritual associations, and *mokshatva*, desire for liberation. These four qualifications are necessary, otherwise there will be mistakes in the process of thinking and thinking is the system of meditation – systematic thinking through the purified mind, thinking on a particular point according to the instructions of a guru. This leads to meditation. Then there is *shravan*, hearing, which leads to contemplation.

Jnana comes only after purification of chitta. In one asana you think about your ishta devata, your symbol, or

Brahman, the Cosmic Being. You must have an outline for your thinking and that is provided by the guru. In jnana yoga the thinking process is absolutely logical as far as the Hindu way of thinking is concerned. In bhakti yoga there is no place for logic. In raja yoga there is very little use of logic, but in jnana there is no place for illogical thinking. The thinking is systematic and orderly.

Therefore, we don't teach jnana yoga to beginners because people would start thinking in the wrong way. In order to practise jnana it is necessary to think according to the outlines provided by the guru, in accordance with the logic in the shastras. It is a difficult, analytical approach which can be made only by one who has a pure mind, a thorough background of the scriptures and the company of a guru. This is said in the Upanishads. However, it is a logical process and therefore it is accessible to everyone. You can have any kind of background. The background of the thinking process may vary from culture to culture, from people to people, but one thing is true: the process of knowledge in western philosophy ultimately leads to scepticism. You know the proverb about seven blind people talking about an elephant. So, in this case the line of thinking should be guided carefully by an experienced teacher.



Ahimsa and Criminals

23 September 1967

What is your concept of ahimsa?

My definition of ahimsa is that a person who is a mischief-maker, who is creating tyranny, must be punished and one who is poor and defenceless must be given protection. That is the definition of ahimsa according to Hinduism and that is the definition that I have always maintained. It means that when you kill a snake or a mosquito you save many lives. That is ahimsa. When you kill one dacoit you save many homes. That is included in the concept of ahimsa.

Ahimsa does not mean ‘non-killing of life’. The word ‘*himsa*’ in Sanskrit means ‘hatred’ and the prefix ‘*a*’ means ‘non’. So, the word *ahimsa* means ‘non-hatred’ and not ‘non-killing’. For example, the judge of a high court passes sentence and, according to his decision even an innocent person may be condemned to death, but this is not himsa. However, if the same judge goes to a person’s home and kills him that is himsa because he has done it with hatred. He has not done it in order to protect the society.

So it is defined in the shastras and the life of Krishna was a living example of ahimsa. However, after the advent of Buddha, ahimsa came to be interpreted as completely refraining from the killing of life. That concept was taken to an extreme by the Jain sect. They not only refrained from

killing the apparent organisms, but they even covered their mouth and nose so that the microbes would not be killed. Even today when they walk at night, they carry a very soft broom in order to sweep away any insects from the path. They do not keep any water in a vessel at night because they are afraid some insects might fall into it. These are fanatic concepts which I have never agreed with.

There are still a few sects existing in India where you have to pay a certain penalty or you have to go to a particular place in order to expiate yourself for killing a frog or a cat. Well, that is not my concept of ahimsa. I personally feel that if you see a rowdy snake you should take a stick and kill it. It is better to sacrifice one insignificant life for the sake of many precious lives. That comes within the range of ahimsa.

Is it himsa to kill another human being?

If there is no law against it you can do it. In the shastras it is said that the code of ahimsa is not applicable during war. The code of ahimsa, satya, brahmacharya or any ethical or moral law is meant for sannyasins and aspirants, it is not meant for a *kshatriya*, a military man, fighting in a war. These moral codes which you have studied in raja yoga are the *dharma*, or way of life, for highly evolved or you may say differently evolved, or psychically evolved people or aspirants. Ahimsa is not applicable for a *kshatriya*. The *dharma* of a *kshatriya* is to eat meat three times a day. In *Gita* Krishna tells Arjuna that the people he will kill will all be killed anyway, so he should not worry.

Therefore, we say that ahimsa is only applicable for those people who are very sensitive, who try to analyze every action. It is not meant for everyone. You see, in society there are different types of people. Primitives, for example, are not so worried about ahimsa, they don't know whether killing and non-killing are two different things or not. They see a bird and they kill it. When they see another bird hurt on the ground, they pick it up and nurse it. Their concepts are not so evolved.

If you ask other people who are educated and cultured they will say, “Oh no, you should not kill anything.” They are devotees of ahimsa. They don’t even want to hurt anyone’s feelings, but you will find that they eat meat three times a day. This is because they are not able to analyze, they are not highly evolved, but they are very sensitive souls. It is for these people that my definition of ahimsa also applies. It is a balancing of the extreme definition of ahimsa.

The definition of ahimsa changes according to the evolution of human conception. After a few hundred years it may change. There might come a time when human beings say, “No, don’t kill even a single fly”, or they may just say that ahimsa is a state of non-hatred, that’s all, but I think the eternal viewpoint is that one should have a non-revengeful attitude and one should always protect the significant life. It doesn’t mean you should kill the insignificant life unnecessarily, but if the more significant and highly evolved life is endangered, then you should do it.

If you are all sitting here and a tiger comes into your midst what are you going to do? Are you going to shoot it or are you going to open the pages of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*? Even within the social laws so much freedom has been given in an emergency situation. If a thief comes into your home, you can shoot him directly in order to protect your life and property.

The practice of absolute ahimsa is only possible for a man who has given up all his responsibilities and duties in life, who has completely retired and prepared himself for ultimate realization. For one who is living in society and who has many commitments in life the practice of absolute ahimsa, as it is understood by the people, is not at all practical, but the concept as pronounced by the Hindu shastras is very practical. You can always protect the poor and punish the tyrant. That is the first dharma and the concept of ahimsa has to be understood in this light.

So there cannot be any simple definition of ahimsa. You can say, “Don’t kill animals or people, that is ahimsa”, but

when the question of punishing the tyrant comes, then what are you going to do? This is the final question and this is the challenge of practical life in which the hard reality passes before the path of your ahimsa. It is a challenge.

In the first chapter of the *Gita*, Arjuna did not want to fight. He said, "If I fight, all these people will be killed, their wives will be unprotected and their children will be unprotected. The enemies will take them away. Then those women will bear children and the children will be born with cross impressions. That will be a great loss to our heritage because they will become enemies of our culture."

Again, in the same chapter, Arjuna says, "Oh Lord, my hand is trembling, my skin is burning, my head is reeling. I can't stand to think that all these people should be killed. No, it is not possible. I will not fight. Even if I have to renounce the kingdom, even if I have to renounce pleasure, even if I have to renounce the wealth of the entire state, I am not going to fight. This is my final decision." Having said that Arjuna threw down his bow and arrows and sat down behind the chariot. That was the first chapter of the *Gita*.

Immediately, Lord Krishna laughed and said, "Oh Arjuna, you are so brave, so great and so full of valour. Now what has happened to you? You have become so weak in mind that you are unable to decide on the issue according to your dharma. You are a kshatriya, you are not a merchant. You are in the military field. So many preparations have been made. Kings and many people have come from different parts of the country to take part in the war. Now both sides are lined up on the battlefield and you say, 'No killing – ahimsa'. How do you understand this sublime philosophy, that you should make a retreat in the name of ahimsa? No, it is cowardice. The armies will never understand it and, not only will they, even posterity will criticize your actions however glorious and justified they may be."

Then Krishna asked Arjuna, "If you die and if others die in the war, what harm is there? It has to be. Will anybody say, 'Oh Arjuna, such a wise man he was. On the battlefield his

consciousness developed, he saw everybody was being killed, so he made a spiritual retreat.' Nobody will say it, because if a kshatriya speaks of ahimsa on the battlefield, it is nothing but cowardice, it is his fear complex that is talking."

So, I think the practice of absolute ahimsa is only possible when you have given up karma, society and all relations, when you have given up everything, like the great sage Jadabharat, sitting in meditation, even if a snake comes. That absolute state of ahimsa is not applicable to us. Swami Nityananda of Vajreshwari sat without any protection, always, all his life and snakes, scorpions, lions, tigers and everything used to be around him.

For him there was no meditation; he was beyond meditation. There was no God; he was beyond God. He did not do conscious meditation because there was no consciousness of the body. He had no cloth. Anybody might bring food to him. He might eat it or he might not, unconsciously. That state is beyond all. In that state all the shastras are useless, whether Hindu, Christian or Islam. It is a state beyond religion. Then if one practises ahimsa, or if one doesn't, it is all the same.

Do you think that criminals can be reformed by yogic practices?

Those who are criminals due to subconscious tendencies can be changed, but those who are criminals consciously are not easy to change. If you want to know whether a criminal can be changed through yoga, first you must ask him, "Why are you in jail?" If he answers, "The police have prosecuted me, but I am innocent", then leave him. It means that he doesn't want to admit that he has committed a crime, or if he is really innocent, then yoga is not necessary because he is not a criminal. However, if he admits to it and says, "Yes, I did it and now I am suffering. What should I do?" That person can be changed. You will succeed with a few practices of yoga nidra.

Another type which can be changed is a person who is not consciously a criminal, a kleptomaniac for instance.

A little boy goes to your house and takes a few pens. You ask him, "What have you done?" He replies, "I took some fountain pens", and then he cries. That type can be helped through yoga, but it will take a little more time because you will have to go inside and bring the whole thing up to his conscious mind. However, those who refuse to admit the crime cannot be helped by yoga. They need big whips and fasting. You will have to explode their unconscious by force, by shock, by beating them.

There is a certain type of hardened criminal that you find sometimes. They are drunkards and meat eaters. They can do anything. They are absolutely fearless. They don't care for anybody. When you ask them if they committed a crime, they reply, "Yes, I did it. What do I care for police? I can shoot anyone at any time." Such a criminal can be cured if you have spiritual power.

Once I stayed in a village where a hardened criminal, a very infamous man, lived. His job was to take a revolver and go to your home with a stamped paper which read, "I donate fifty acres of land to Lakshmi", and make you sign it with a revolver at your head. Then, at the next house, he would make them give seventy bulls and so on until he had thousands of acres of land, and hundreds of bulls and horses, etc. Everyone in the whole village was afraid of him.

One day he came to me and sat down very quietly. He became my friend and I taught him a little Hindi, then he took me to his house. I went there a number of times and little by little he unveiled all his secrets. One day he said, "Here are all my revolvers." Another day he said, "I can keep awake for seven days and nights. I can cycle for 100 miles at a stretch."

All day and night he used to drink country wine. Every half an hour or so he would take a glass. He also smoked a lot. His eyes were always blood red. It appeared as if he was always conscious, but there were some moments in his life when he became emotional. He used to talk about Rama and Krishna and the right things used to come from his heart.

When I was giving satsang he used to sit and if I made a little mistake he would correct me.

One time I asked him, “How much cash have you got in your house?” because I knew he would not put it in the bank. He brought it all to me in a cloth bag – five lakhs in cash notes; he could not even count it. “Swamiji,” he said, “here is the money. Now tell me where to put it, what to do.” I told him to put it all in the bank. Then he said, “You keep 5,000 with you.” I said, “No, if I want any money, I will not take it from you because every paisa of yours is the income of the poor and oppressed. They have given it to you out of fear. I don’t want any money from you. Finish this off and earn something in the right way. Then you can give me as much as you want.”

That impressed him so much that he changed his life completely. He left all his bad habits. He began to get up at three o’clock in the morning and take a bath at the well with about 200 buckets of water. In the beginning, when he was practising asanas, his sweat smelled just like wine because his whole body was wine, but gradually he improved. I told him he should invest in a small business. There was no use continuing with his old ways because times were changing. He followed my advice and now he leads a very good life. He also gave a lot of money to charity.

The point I want to make here is that such hardened criminals, who have gone beyond a certain stage, can be influenced by good association and satsang. It is not necessary to teach them yoga nidra. Those criminals are very sensitive, intelligent and quite alert. You can even say they are highly psychic. I can tell you about a thief who used to come here to steal small light bulbs. I used to keep people awake at night to catch him, but when he came everyone would sleep. Finally I said, “Let me try.” I put my bed outside underneath a tree. I knew he would come between two and three so I waited, but at that time some force overpowered me and I slept. The moment he tried to climb down the tree, however, I caught him. He was a very simple man, but

his one-pointed concentration on the light bulb gave him so much willpower that he could even put a sannyasin to sleep.

There are many cases like this. At the exact moment some force comes and overpowers you, then you find out that something has been stolen. I have seen dacoits, who go on plunders at night, worshipping Kali at the temple. They don't worship any other god. They say all the other gods are virtuous. They only protect virtuous people, they don't protect dacoits. Only Kali protects them.

So, they go to Kali and recite various mantras. Then they take their revolver and go out because they know they will succeed on that night and if they are going to be caught they know it the moment they step out of the temple. Some of those people are so sensitive, so psychic and so super-intelligent that if you try to give them the right advice and if you have got the real heart to help them, they will listen, but if they are just the ordinary thieves from the market it is very difficult to improve them.

Are criminals corrected by putting them in prison?

Some of them are because they have different temperaments. Psychologically some need love, some need thrashing, some need reformation, some need diversion, some need occupation. You can't have a simple rule for everyone. Even if you beat someone, it can be done with love in order to improve them. Love is not only affection; even a slap is love. You slap your son because you love him and you want him to improve.

However, whenever a person is seen in the act of dacoity, murder or anything, he must be taken out of the society. That is the first principle which should never be changed. No time should be wasted in removing him from society, otherwise the psychic infection will spread. Another man will become like that. People are criminals for many reasons: their upbringing, society, wrong type of training, education, including transmigration, heredity, environment, food, parents, brothers and sisters.

Is there any possibility of seeing criminal tendencies at a young age and doing something about it before any damage is done to society?

No. We put them in jail because the government does not have any alternative arrangement. They cannot allow that man to remain in society. However, certain psychological experiments have been tried. In England, about seven years ago, they took about a hundred criminals and a kind of brainwashing was given to them. At night when they went to bed a tape recording was played to them while they were awake. This went on for fifteen days and nights, and sixty people improved. So, something can be done, but unless the government undertakes the research it is not going to change anything.

In India we have many thieves and dacoits, but their minds are perfectly balanced. They do it purposely; it is not a psychic derangement. In the West it is not like that. People just become neurotic and they don't know what to do, so they go out and commit some sort of crime and end up in jail. For those people the government should provide an ashram or monastic environment, a large area of ten to twenty acres divided into small units and they must classify the criminals according to psychology of person, not according to the crime. Then, according to the psychological grouping, the units should be further divided because one type of person may differ from another of the same type according to age, sex, wealth, etc.

The head of this ashram should be a person who has nothing to do with the world. With the financial help of the government he should care for the criminals. In the morning and at night he must exhaust all their criminal tendencies through *Gita* chanting, yoga nidra, trataka, asanas, pranayamas, etc., but most important, he must find out what the criminal really wants. After doing this for about five months, then you should get them into light meditation, closing the eyes and watching the breath. After six more months of this you can give them some books on the lives of

saints. After this, everything will be fine. They will do the rest themselves.

However, if you try to make industrialists out of these prisoners you will only spoil them. The ambitious mind, the mind full of desires, full of materialistic thoughts must learn self-control. When it cannot control itself it falls into criminal ways. Remember, many criminals are highly psychic, highly intelligent. They are as intelligent as Einstein or Newton. They can tell by your eyes how much money you have and they are highly organized. A taxi driver takes you somewhere and, along the way, he tells someone else, so there is always someone watching you. As you pass through different territories or jurisdictions new people take over the job. The first moment you are not watching, your valuables disappear. They are very psychic and it is not possible to reform them by the present methods.

If you are really thinking something should be done about this problem you should make a brochure about the possibilities of utilizing the so-called criminals for developing a great race which will be the saviour of mankind in the future. This kind of symposium should be organized in different countries. Then you could give a complete list in that brochure of different types of criminals, their psychological classifications and background. These brochures should be published and submitted to the government.

We do not have the right to force a man to do wrong, so do we have the right to force him to do good?

A man goes wrong by himself and a man becomes right by himself, but if a man goes wrong on account of society, he can also become right on account of society. There are some people who spoil us and there are some people who make us right. As we are interconnected and interrelated with every individual we feel the issue. Again, even if we have not done any wrong or we are not responsible for making others go wrong, what right have we got to correct them?

Because sometimes evil is suppressed by personal efforts to do good, or to make someone do good, but the moment you loosen the control, the evil comes up again with double force. This is the law. There is no use in suppressing evil and encouraging good. Good and evil will always be there. This is one theory.

It is very simple to understand, but in practice it is very difficult. If a servant steals some things, you say, "All right, let him evolve by himself." This is the saintly way. Once a thief came into the house of a saint and took some chapattis. The saint said, "Wait a minute, I am bringing the ghee also."

This is the peculiarity of saints, but we never think that way. Whether it is due to ignorance, a sense of egoism or a kind of selfish responsibility, we have always felt that we have some duty towards the evolving society. There are some people who say that this idea to do good is avidya. We do not know the reality. The whole cosmos is moving under a certain law or force. This force compels us to think or to act in particular ways. Everything is moving under the great cosmic law, so why worry about good and bad? But still we worry.

What is the concept of good and evil at the end of the world?

At the end of the world, evil remains supreme, this is the concept. Evil will ultimately suppress good. That is history repeating itself, but this is what they say, not what I say. I have a different view altogether. I feel that an intellectual psychic race will emerge in which all people will live for the sake of liberation and the highest evolution. Evil must end and good must evolve into eternal good. Good and evil cannot coexist. When there is good, there is no evil. They are two sides of one coin. Beyond good and evil is spiritual life, and that age is yet to come.

39

Jnana Yoga, Kundalini and Love

24 September 1967

What is the role of emotions in connection with emotional withdrawal of the mind and senses?

In classical Indian philosophy, bhakti is supposed to be the quickest means for sense withdrawal. Bhakti is devotion, not emotion. Sensory withdrawal takes place through devotion, not through emotion. Emotions always disturb the mental structure and as a result of that the withdrawal of the senses becomes very difficult. Therefore, the emotions must be properly channelled and then they are called *bhakti*, devotion. When bhakti is practised, the withdrawal of the senses takes place automatically. According to the Indian way of thinking, attachment for things which are not eternal is emotion, and attachment for things which are eternal is devotion.

Emotions arise from *avidya* which is ignorance or you may call it primitive instinct. From avidya comes *vasana*, attachment. Emotions have a great influence on the individual and the society. They are responsible for psychological breakdowns and depression. Emotion is the lower expression of human sentiment. We can help people around us much better without expressing our emotions for them, because the emotional personality of man is very imbalanced. In order to balance the emotions one must develop devotion.

What is dharma and what is karma?

Even according to Indian philosophy the meaning of the word dharma has not been decided. Some call it duty, some call it religion, others call it virtue, yet others call it right living, but still there has never been a final definition. Summing up the thoughts of Indian philosophy, *dharma* means 'spirituality', that is all. Spirituality can be used instead of dharma, for example, Hindu dharma, Buddhist dharma or Christian dharma. Dharma is also religion or they will say the dharma of a son, daughter, sister, father which comes under the sense of duty.

In the *Mahabharata* there are references which say anything that holds the society together and protects the structure of society or helps the society to evolve, is dharma. Dharma is derived from the root *dhri*, 'to hold'. There are certain values on which society is maintained; that is dharma. This is also one of the definitions. *Karma* means 'action', 'movement'. It is derived from the root *kri*, 'to act', 'to move'.

What is the concept of sin in Hindu religion and yoga?

In fact, there is no Hindu religion. In India we believe in *Sanatana dharma*, the eternal value. According to that concept, sin is one of the manifestations of your consciousness. Up to a point, certain actions are considered as sin because society as a community, as a nation, as a whole is hurt by them. Although there is a spiritual concept of sin for which you are punished after this life in certain regions of hell, where you are cut into 1,000 pieces and boiled in oil, that is a mythological concept. The classical concept is action which becomes a source of trouble, by which the society degenerates gradually, and ultimately the community becomes extinct. That is called sin.

It is said that in ancient times there were many races all over the world, but those people lived in such a way that eventually they became completely extinct. Take, for example, the powerful empire of the great Ravana. Today in India there is no one who can say they belong to that

race. Why is this? It is because of sin. Ravana committed such errors that ultimately everybody in his community became low minded. That is the concept of sin according to traditional Indian thought.

In yoga there is no concept of sin at all. Yoga does not discuss sin because yoga believes in spontaneous expression of consciousness at different levels of manifestation. Just as a snake sheds its skin, it is neither sin nor any speciality of the snake; it is the expression of the physical body. In the same way, the expression of the individual self, atma or jivatma, takes place at different levels of consciousness. Birth after birth it dies, it is born as a cat, it behaves like a cat, it dies. It is born again as a dog, it behaves like a dog, it dies and is born as an elephant. It dies and is born as a lower man. The society changes. The atmosphere changes and, in the same manner, the tendency of expression of itself changes in different incarnations.

Therefore, whatever you express or whatever others express is not sin, because sin is that which a man commits on account of his own power without control over himself. An animal has no control. It has to follow the spontaneous steps of evolution. There is absolutely no escape from it.

The concept of sin in Christianity is the same as the concept of any theology such as Islam or Hindu sects like the Vaishnavas, Shaivites, Shaktas. The only difference is in expression.

The relation between avidya and sin is that avidya is the root of all sins. The jivatma which we are talking about in yoga is enveloped by avidya. This avidya is a kind of instinctive behaviour. Even though we are human beings and we call ourselves conscious still most of our action and thinking is instinctive. We think that it is not, but it is. After a certain point the instinctive expressions of life are transcended and then one begins to function on the intellectual level. When that is also transcended, then one starts to function on the intuitive level. When that stops, one begins to function on the spiritual level. At that time avidya is completely finished. Even on the intellectual level there

are traces of avidya and on the intuitive level there may be no avidya as such, but there are still flashbacks of avidya.

What was the philosophy of Buddha?

Buddha was neither an atheist nor a theist. He was a moral teacher. He wanted to teach some of the morals to the society in which he was living. By virtue of his own thinking he had arrived at a certain conclusion. As a prince he belonged to a royal race, therefore in Bihar he exercised a very great influence.

A number of times, when asked if he believed in God, he said, "Do not worry about it. I have not come to preach about God." I do not know whether he believed in God or not, but it seems that he was not very keen on it. He did not want people to waste their time thinking about God and doing all sorts of evil. He did not preach about Divinity or about anything that was beyond the senses of the common man. Even the concept of atma according to Buddha is a concept which we can understand. He said the flow of your consciousness can be compared with the existence of atma.

For a theist who believes in God, it is very difficult to accept the Buddhist philosophy. I have studied it and I personally believe that he spoke about a revolution, that's all. Buddha spoke 2,500 years ago when social conditions were completely different. Things have changed since then. He was a great man, there is no doubt, because he had cosmic consciousness, he had enlightenment, he had a revolutionary mind and he wanted to create a new order of society, a new order of religion.

Buddha never preached about God. Perhaps this is the only great scripture in the world where God's name is not referred to. Whenever great scholars used to go to him and bring up this subject, he always used to say, "I do not want to talk about this matter. I do not know anything about God and you do not know anything about God. Why do you want to talk about God when you don't know what man is, when you don't know what you are yourself? You want to talk about

something very great. You are unable to carry even a gallon of water by yourself, yet you talk about carrying a wagon full. You have not been able to make your life peaceful, *sukha shanti*.”

People came to him with a number of questions which he considered to be meaningless for their spiritual evolution. One respected scholar wanted to know what happens to the soul after death. He said, “I can give you a proper reply which will satisfy you, but what will you gain? Will it change your life? If so, I will give you a reply. If not, I will not answer for I talk only of those things which have a direct impact on your individual life.” Buddha had eight rules of conduct, the *ashtanga marga*; he used to talk about that alone.

What are the differences between his views and the views of Krishnamurti?

They are practically the same, but Krishnamurti excludes even the ethics. Another difference is that Buddha was a powerful man in India. Wherever he used to go, there were 500 monks with him and devotees used to make all the arrangements. The place where he stayed was known as Bihar – a place for nuns to live, a place for monks to live. *Bihar*, or *vihar*, means ‘monastery’ or ‘math’.

So the whole province or state came to be known as Bihar. This is the province in which all the great events of Buddha’s life took place. Even today this place has the same philosophical background. Although the people here believe in God and worship in one way or another, still they behave and think very much like Buddhists. They are Hindus, but they think very differently from the South Indians. They are very courageous thinkers. Krishnamurti is a powerless man. He does not wield any social, national or political power and that makes a very great difference.

Is the kundalini awakened during the practice of jnana yoga?

According to Swami Sivananda, kundalini awakening takes place in a jnana yogi as long as the practices are done

systematically. However, if you read all the scriptures on jnana yoga, you will not find any references to kundalini awakening. Swami Sivananda has written that kundalini can be awakened by many methods: deep meditation, brahmacharya, pure hearted karma yoga, jnana yoga, vedantic realization and so on.

The thinkers on jnana and Vedanta feel that by this rational approach the individual self is made free from the bonds of avidya and then the state of *shuddha chitta*, the illumined intellect of pure reason, comes about. It is not the ordinary reasoning with which you conceive; it is a state of pure reason wherein comes realization about the meaning of life, *atma*, and the experience of cosmic being, cosmic existence, cosmic truth.

The books on jnana yoga have never given such symptoms as the heating of mooladhara and all that. They say there is only experience – *aparoksha anubhuti*, indirect or impersonal experience, and *pratyaksha bhuti*, direct or personal experience. Direct experience is when you experience a particular object through the senses – the eyes see, the ears hear. Indirect experience is when the senses are completely withdrawn, and the mind and samskaras are withdrawn and purified.

Shankara has written a small book on that experience, *Aparoksha Anubhuti*, which has been translated into English by many scholars. They say that experience has nothing to do with the sense experience, mental experience, psychic experience, emotional experience or physical experience. It is an experience evolving within oneself, without any medium of consciousness. It does not occur because the eyes and brain are functioning. In *aparoksha anubhuti* no form of consciousness is responsible for experience.

Is it higher than the experience of the inner voice?

Yes, much higher. In jnana yoga the thinkers are so intellectual that they do not believe in any inner voice. They say this is one of the expressions of your inner consciousness. They do

not believe in anything else. They believe that ultimately the *atman*, the self, is freed from avidya and maya. When the self is separated from avidya and maya through certain sadhanas taught by the guru, the soul, atman, shines and there is a state called self-experience. Jnana yoga is a purely intellectual path and there is no talk about kundalini at all.

What do you mean by kundalini – the ascent of the physical force or the ascent of consciousness?

If you ask me what the awakening of kundalini is I would say it is the awakening of consciousness. Evolution from the primitive state up to the highest state is the process of the awakening of kundalini. According to this theory, kundalini has already awakened to a very high degree because the consciousness has proceeded from a primitive state. This is the general concept, but my concept is that the awakening of kundalini is a very great event in life. It may happen in any incarnation of a human being. At the same time, I also agree with the view that the evolution of consciousness proceeds from the deepest root to the highest summit, sahasrara, where we shall be illumined after many incarnations. This is also the process of the awakening of kundalini.

How is the inner voice heard?

The inner voice comes in a language which is spoken and heard inside. It is not necessarily the language that you speak. For instance, revelation came to Mohammed in a language that he did not speak. In the same manner, revelations came to others in different languages. For instance, there was a princess in ancient times suffering from leprosy. She went to two great physicians who prescribed some medicine and a particular way of life. While she was practising that, she heard a voice, and that became a richa or sloka of the Vedas. She did not know Sanskrit, or Brahmi or anything of that sort.

The voice which is heard at different levels of consciousness is different. Sometimes it is heard in a language which

you speak or in a language which you do not speak, but in which it is supposed to be preached. For example, I am sitting here and I get a revelation in the German language. It means I have to go to Germany. In the highest form of consciousness a voice is heard. It is a voice that has no language. You may call it a voice or simply an expression. If it is heard in the form of a language, you do not know if you are hearing it in English or in Sanskrit. I remember a few experiences many years back. I heard something, but I did not know whether I heard it or saw it, whether it was a language or a picture.

Is it possible to regress in evolution?

No. You move forward, you cannot go back. If you want to look back and see the previous stages of consciousness it is usually difficult to do unless, of course, you are at the highest stage of samadhi. At a particular point of samadhi all the previous stages of consciousness are revealed to you in a flash. You remember all your past incarnations.

What happens when an aspirant has awakened kundalini already in a previous life?

It will awaken again, but I feel that one can complete the whole task in one birth by voluntary efforts, by exerting oneself sincerely, solely and exclusively to spiritual evolvment in this life. So what happens in the course of nature, during many incarnations, can happen in one life through individual efforts.

The awakening of kundalini will take place in everyone, but not in one incarnation. It will take place in many incarnations gradually, but here we are trying to create that condition of awakening through yogic methods. Of course, it is difficult because one has to put forth effort. If you do not practise kundalini yoga, you will be an awakened soul within a few hundred or a few thousand incarnations, no doubt. That is the ultimate destiny of every being, but yoga is putting forth the effort to finish the whole thing in this life itself.

What are the indications of the level at which kundalini should be awakened?

There are definite indications. According to the scriptures, when the *jiva*, individual soul, is bright enough for practising kundalini yoga, when the body can stand the rigours of the awakening, when the nervous system can stand the vibrations, then the person becomes highly spiritual. He is more inclined towards the inner realities than towards the outer things. He is able to keep his mind introverted inside for long hours without any lethargy, sleep or dizziness. The hunger decreases very much, the physical body feels very light. From time to time, during meditation, flashes of light are seen. At the time of meditation the production of heat is also experienced in the lower part of the body. Sometimes one experiences a sensation of ants crawling through the spinal cord or electric currents. These are the indications which tell you that the time is coming. You will always perceive some of the symptoms, not necessarily all, but one symptom is very common, lightness of the body.

Is it a natural growth?

If one does not practise kundalini yoga, in the course of evolution, over hundreds of lives, this event takes place. Then one will not know the moment of awakening because the entire experience takes place over a long range of time. What could be experienced now in one second is then evolved in many, many lives, so it is imperceptible in that case.

Can one awaken kundalini during illness?

It is very difficult. The mind of one who wants to awaken kundalini should be very strong. It should not flicker, regardless of what happens before you, whether it concerns you or not. The mind must be steady, not like a lamp which is blown by the wind, but like a torch light. Even if you have fever, diarrhoea or any ailment, still the mind must be unaffected by the suffering.

What is the role of yoga in spiritual evolution?

Yoga is voluntary effort. It forces your consciousness to run fast.

Can suggestion be used to speed up our spiritual progress?

It is very beneficial in the beginning stages of yoga and even in advanced stages to fill up the mind with positive suggestions, but ultimately the mind has to become non-suggestive. Dhyana is non-suggestive.

How can we know we are following the right guidance?

If the guidance is correct, you never fall. When you do fall, it is due to lack of interest. When you practise for months and months without seeing any results, you want to give it up. Sometimes the physical body falls ill and it comes to your mind that maybe it is due to practising yoga. Then you stop it. So, constant guidance is necessary, somebody to watch you, to tell you, somebody to whom you can talk. A guru should be there who can keep telling you every now and then.

What happens if the guru is far away?

It doesn't matter. The mother keeps caring for her child even if it is in London. Guidance is very necessary from moment to moment.

What is love for a guru?

Practise it and find out. It is not the love that a son has for his father or mother. It is psychic, not rational, not emotional. The relation between guru and disciple should be psychic. The communion takes place without disturbing the mind. In the silence of the night, when you remember someone emotionally, that is disturbance. You feel that he is with you. The moment the disciple thinks about the guru on that level the mind becomes quiet and the communion takes place. It may be communion between guru and disciple or between the inner and the outer soul. If it is emotional then there is no sleep.

What about the love of Radha for Krishna?

Yes, she was a human being. She had human emotions, not psychic emotions. At the same time, everybody is not qualified to practise that power because the bhakti of Radha is of the supreme type. Anyone who has not purified himself, who has not gone beyond the level of the senses, is bound to be in a great emotional crisis in his life if he practises the power of Radha for Lord Krishna or the power of Sita for Rama. The practice of Radha power and Sita power is known as motherly power. It is one of the aspects of bhakti, the sweet attitude. In order to practise it, one has to purify oneself thoroughly.

In India there have been many sects which preach this Radha and Sita power, sweet and kind from morning until night. Radha was always restless in separation from Lord Krishna, so they tried to imitate it, but most of them did not evolve spiritually, they became mad and crazy. Many people in India consider themselves as Radha and they try to do the same things which she did, but after all, when one has not purified oneself, how can one love God as a wife loves a husband or a husband loves a wife?

Is this a type of psychic emotion?

Do not use the words psychic emotion. Rather it is a psychic experience because in the higher level of psychic consciousness, the emotions do not play a great part; they are subdued. After you have practised yoga for many years you will know that the mind can think in a different way altogether. You see, it is nothing but a turn of the mind. Our ancestors used to think in a different way. It is only how we turn and tune the mind. You can turn and tune the mind on the emotional range, on the intellectual range or on the psychic range.

What about rational love?

Rational love means the communion between two persons which is arrived at after a lot of thinking of the pros and

cons. Those who want to develop love on a rational basis have to think in a particular manner and then they have to take into consideration different actions and reactions that will follow in that love. One sees the whole thing before one's eyes and ultimately one decides that therefore the love should proceed. Love itself is not emotional or rational. Love is love, but you have an emotional, rational or psychic background.

What is love?

That is a thing I should ask you. You should ask me: what is detachment? Everybody in the world wants to know what love is. It is a part of your being. When you do it in a planned way it is rational. When it is prompted by a higher force it is psychic. When it is only for the satisfaction of your animal senses it is physical.



Yoga Therapy in Society

25 September 1967

How does compassion arise in the mind?

Compassion appears to be of two shades. One is an ethical or moral quality and the second is the sum total of self-realization or purity. One can have compassion on the sentimental level which may not be true compassion, but still it is compassion. For example, we may not be pure at heart, yet we have compassion for mankind, for a community or for a person. Then there is a higher type of compassion which is known as *karuna*. This type arises in man only when he is completely purified and has become one with himself.

In short, when one has attained jivanmukta the inherent compassion, not the sentimental or reactionary compassion, arises in the mind naturally and spontaneously. This is the jivanmukta's compassion, the highest of thoughts. We are only mortals and we do not have access to that kind of compassion, but rather to a reactionary type of compassion which is really a reaction to cruelty. For example, we keep hopeless cases alive, thus preventing them from exhausting their karma. Shouldn't we leave it to nature to decide when one is ready to die?

In most countries, including India, doctors keep many terminal patients alive, even in old age. For instance, the mother of one of my disciples is well over a hundred. She

cannot walk or talk or think or see. She can not even go to the toilet on her own, medicine has to be administered until she passes. A number of times she was on the verge of death but the doctors brought her back to life.

This is the result of *moha*, attachment, and also scientific experimentation. However, the truth remains that the karmas which a man is suffering from cannot be exhausted unless he is allowed to go ahead with a new life. To prolong a life which is useless is interfering with the laws of nature. If a man has access to certain laws of nature, he interferes with the lives of others. If I do not know the laws of nature and an old man is about to die, I will have to let him die a natural death, but if I know the laws of nature, I can extend his life by ten or fifteen years.

I think that in hopeless cases, where a man is unable to contribute anything towards the social, economic or spiritual welfare of others or to be useful, even to himself as far as enjoyment of life is concerned, then it is better to let him die. A man can be useful to himself either in the form of spiritual realization or in the form of enjoyment.

Once, Swami Sivananda saw a man with leprosy sitting under a tree about one and a half miles from the ashram. He was in a very bad condition so Swami Sivananda had him packed into a gunny bag and brought him back to the ashram. He wanted all of us to look after him. Everyone agreed because of reactionary compassion, but I said, "No. I will not look after that man. There is no use in it. If you put me in charge I will take some potassium cyanide from the hospital and put him to death the same night."

Then there was an argument and I said that what I intended was not cruelty, but rather mercy. This is what a man should do. Even if you are able to give him good medicines what is the benefit? People will never touch him. You cannot bring back his lost nose unless you are a plastic surgeon and give him your own nose. I could not see any future for him. I could not see any purpose in prolonging his suffering, but these obstinate, egotistical compassionates

wanted to assert themselves. I call God compassionate; he explodes civilization after civilization.

After a few months it became too expensive to continue the treatment and different doctors would say different things about the medicines which should be given. Finally, Swami Sivananda got fed up and he agreed with me. My idea was to buy a plot of land a few miles away from the town and provide a place with medicine and government doctors, not only for this leper, but for two hundred and fifty more.

When it was ready, everyone came. I was in charge for six months and I did not even poison anyone! The leper was very happy there because he could smoke. More lepers came and they used to laugh and tell jokes. The leper colony grew very fast. Many people contributed and within a few months we had seventy or eighty thousand rupees. Compassion must have a background and then it is beneficial, not blind compassion.

How can yoga be introduced into hospital life?

We can introduce asanas and pranayamas into physiotherapy. We can also introduce pranayama and yoga nidra into mental hospitals under strict guidance and experimental observation. Some asanas and pranayamas can be introduced into maternity hospitals. In India we teach the mothers certain practices for safe delivery. Asanas and pranayamas are very useful after surgery has been performed on the joints to prevent stiffness. Yoga can be introduced into any hospital and the program can be decided by one of the doctors or nurses.

What yoga practices can be recommended for the treatment of mental diseases?

There are many different types of mental diseases. Some are due to depression and some are due to agitation. Therefore, yoga exercises must be given on an individual basis. For some mental disorders bhastrika or kapalbhati are helpful. For others you will have to teach vipareet karani. Generally all

kriyas in which moola bandha and vajroli mudra are present will help.

What about periodical depression?

Periodical depressions that are a part of psychosis can be treated by long and sustained yoga practices, but you have to put forth a great amount of effort and present all the various types of yoga such as karma yoga, jnana yoga, raja yoga and bhakti yoga. You must observe the types of yoga which the patient likes and benefits from most.

During the period of depression karma yoga is most important. Bhakti and jnana must be avoided, because these make the patient more sensitive and self-conscious. You have to paralyze that defect first and this is possible through certain practices of raja yoga, nada yoga and trataka. When sensitivity has been reduced, then the patient can be safely treated. With the manic depressive the treatment is about the same.

What is the yogic treatment for people suffering from schizophrenia?

The schizophrenic should be devoted to some duty or work. There should be complete devotion and love for work, more than for food or anything else. This person should be encouraged to work by his own free will. I had a person like that here. I gave him typing work and he developed a great interest in it. He used to work from three am to ten pm without a break, except for meals and tea, but the day his work was completed, he became the same way again; his mind was split. So, for the treatment of schizophrenia, karma yoga comes first.

What about hospitals in India?

There are very few good mental hospitals in India and they have not tried yoga at all. They use drugs solely. There are very few psychoanalysts. In ashrams individuals such as us may help these sick people.

Is there any literature available on this subject in India?

There might be, but I have not come across it. However, one thing is true. If you want to practise yoga only to improve your mental or psychic condition, the progress will be very slow. It will go at an ant's speed. If you practise yoga for self-realization, the progress will be very quick. Always remember this point.

Therefore, even if you want yoga for the sake of your body and mind, you must have self-realization as your ultimate aim. If your object is self-realization you will attain mental freedom as a sure result. Some people believe in yoga, but only as a form of physical and mental hygiene or as a discipline. Of course, that is all right, but these people progress very slowly in yoga, while the people who are aiming for self-realization change their entire personality in a few weeks or months.

So, it is a thing you will have to decide. There is no systematic literature on this subject. We must have the scientific facts written. Yoga does not cure mental errors, it only improves the mental condition. It treats the mind not the errors. That is the difference between psychotherapy and yoga. Psychotherapy takes errors individually and analyzes them, and in yoga the errors are not recognized as only the mind is important. If the mind is overfed or underfed, if it has right associations or wrong associations, if it is working in a particular way, or if a particular gland is secreting toxins which affect the mind, these are the things that are taken into consideration when yoga therapy is administered. Instead of repairing one room, we repair the whole house.

A patient becomes overconscious of his errors the minute he lays down the hypothesis, "I am practising yoga for my neurosis". The greatest mistake which is made in psychology is to become aware of the error. If you go ahead with self-realization you do not remember the errors, then you become all the stronger. Somehow, if you become indifferent, you forget that you have errors, they go away by themselves. That is the law and that is the secret for treating neurotic

conditions successfully. To those people who are not able to decide upon self-realization as their aim, we first give them yoga practices for the purpose of psychic treatment. After a while, they themselves change their aim. They say, "What is the use of curing this neurosis, why not go after God?" and thus they develop.

Please elaborate on the inner voice.

The inner voice is realized in different spheres of consciousness. The practice prescribed for this is nada yoga, thereby enabling one to come in touch with different sounds. First physical, then intraphysical, then non-physical, next astral, then visionary and thus the consciousness keeps moving inward. The finer the mind becomes, the finer the voices and sounds that are heard. The grosser the mind, the grosser the sound.

Close your eyes and listen to some of the sounds of your brain. You are not hearing them now, but you must concentrate for some time. Certain sounds are actually being produced inside you. When the mind becomes finer, non-physical sounds appear which are not produced by the physical body, but by the subconscious state.

In this way the nada yogis say they hear a bird, the ocean, a flute, a woman's voice, musical notes, etc. Notes of different shapes and dimensions are heard in different stages of nada yoga. After that, when you transcend that stage, you hear voices of animals, men and some sounds in the form of whispers, as if two trees or clouds are talking together. I cannot really explain this phenomenon. You do not actually hear, you feel.

That kind of feeling of the divine sound is also one of the states of nada yoga. Then you hear two persons talking to each other, but you cannot make out the talk. Then when you go deeper, you hear all types of music and you not only hear it, you experience and feel it as well. This is a higher state. Ultimately the inner voice reveals things to you in the form of some vibration; it is not a picture, idea or sound. When

the vibrations come, you understand them as you would a language.

In India there are certain nada yogis who can answer a question by the vibration they receive. It is a type of reverberation that comes to the mind, but they are not intellectuals. The inner voice comes to one in the form of symbols also, some of which are difficult to decipher. For example a positive or negative reply may be revealed by a symbol. The final or divine sound of the inner voice is the sound of *Om* heard within the deeper states of consciousness, as if all the cosmos is whirling and one is only aware of the sound.

What is the relationship between nada and anahata?

The word anahata denotes a sound which is not produced. In the inner states of nada yoga, there is no sound which is produced. Therefore, every sound that is heard in nada yoga is anahata nada. Anahata nada begins with the sound of many birds in the evening which is heard within yourself. Every sound that you hear in nada yoga, with the eyes and ears plugged or not, is anahata nada.

Can the sound of nada yoga later progress into a vision?

The expounders of nada say that it leads to Samadhi, but I believe nada yoga is an incomplete spiritual practice. As far as ultimate realization is concerned, one would have to transcend the nada.

Is it possible that the sound will reveal a symbol?

The best way to find out the symbol is to sit down in deep meditation and ultimately it will come. Instead of getting it through intellect it comes through intuition.

What about the symbol 'Om Shanti'?

It was 5,000 years before Christ when this peace symbol was used. There is a reference to it in Egyptian hieroglyphics in a number of places. Peace and war for a brave man co-exist.

Ask anyone who has heart and he will tell you this. The politicians around the world all profess peace, but inside they really want war; they want to kill you. The more you fear war, the nearer you are to it. War is nothing but a collection of subconscious vibrations.

So, when we talk of peace, we subjugate the war forces. Peace is not only the absence of war. Peace is a positive state of human mind and it can only be obtained by public subjugation of the lower forces, individually or collectively. When you talk about yoga, you bring about the elimination of the *assuric*, dark, forces within yourself. I personally believe that peace is not a passive condition. It is positive and dynamic. I am peaceful because there is nothing wrong in my mind. I am peaceful because I am not aware of all that is wrong. There is peace because there is no war.

Sometimes there can be war without hatred, but I personally feel that peace should be achieved at a very high cost. It is not a cheap commodity. For peace, sacrifice is essential. In any country where there is a lack of renunciation, sacrifice and austerity, peace cannot be maintained at all. Observing the Hindu temperament, I think that the people of India have been fighting with invaders, but they never wanted war. When the invasion was upon them they began to fight. Mohammed Gazni attacked India eighteen times. Each time they caught him and let him go. The Indian kings used to say, "He has gone; he will not come again." This may be noble, but it is not practical. When you think of peace you must always be practical.

Is love and attachment for the nation accepted in yoga?

Yes, patriotism is accepted. You must be loyal to the nation, but you must be able to sacrifice your personal loyalty when international goodwill is at stake. That is the greater vision of a yogi. If you speak like this in any other country they will say it is unpatriotic, but in India they will not say anything. In Hindi there is a poem, "Even if a man offers you poison with love and affection, accept it."

41

Karma and Destiny

28 September 1967

What are the different methods to destroy or exhaust the old samskaras?

The problem of exhausting the old samskaras has been discussed in all religions and philosophies by different scholars, and they have suggested various ways. Some felt that by not creating any new karma you can exhaust the old karmas more quickly, but people could not follow this method. Others felt that through selfless actions we could get rid of the karmas and exhaust the old samskaras, but ultimately it was found that, even by selfless and compassionate acts, karma cannot be exhausted, because once the arrow has been released from the bow, it must reach its destination. These are the karmas which are released from your ancient stock. You cannot destroy them. You must suffer them or enjoy them.

Then there arose the theory that, by realization of the self through different methods such as raja yoga or jnana yoga, one could transcend the karmas and in this way the karmas would be destroyed. Logically and practically this was also found to be incorrect because, after all, not everybody can become self-realized. If, out of millions of people, one man gets realization and all his karmas are destroyed, it is not such a great method. If I produce a plan for electricity and I alone get the electricity, what is the use of creating it at all?

For this reason the theory of self-realization was also refused and stands refused even today.

Then came the theory of exhausting the karmas through a rigorous life of austerity, self-abnegation and self-mortification. From this idea, many cults arose in both the East and West. They thought that by suffering voluntarily, you might not have to suffer in the future. Well, it was a logical deduction, but it was not true because even those people who had undergone tapasya still suffered after that.

Ultimately, I think the best method for the exhaustion of karma is the practice of yoga in accordance with the spirit of *Gita* and not in accordance with the spirit of Patanjali or any other text. Yoga with the background of complete understanding of all the senses, sense objects and the mind is the most effective method.

Another method is also discussed in some of the ancient texts, as well as in modern psychology, by which samskaras can be exhausted in deep meditation and in dreams by the experience of symbols. The samskaras have to express themselves in order to come out. Otherwise, so long as you have vasana, you will have samskara, and so long as you have samskara you will have karma, and as long as you have karma you will accumulate further karmas, further samskaras.

Therefore, in order to exhaust and destroy the old samskaras, it is necessary to take up the yogic method. In yoga there are different methods for the exhaustion of the impressions of the subconscious mind. One of these is called awareness of visions. Instead of practising a definite kriya in accordance to the rules, here you are asked to keep quiet and become aware of all the thought impressions. You don't have to check the visions. You go on seeing them for hours together. You make a note of them, try to understand them and get them analyzed with the help of your guru. Thereby you exhaust all your karma.

Karmas are divided into three groups: samskara, action and destiny. These three comprise karma. Whatever you did in your previous life is embedded in your subconscious

mind, all that remains there, and it is called *sanchit karma* or 'accumulated action'. That is the subconscious stuff. There are some karmas which have started begetting results, suffering or enjoyment. Those are known as *prarabdha*, destiny. Even the suffering or enjoyment is a part of karma; it is not different from karma. Then the new action which you are doing in a new atmosphere, under new training, is also karma.

It is impossible to exhaust the *prarabdha*; destiny is unalterable. That part of karma, not the karmas which are still in the deposit, nor the karmas which you are doing now, but the karmas which come to you in the form of pleasure and pain, they are something like an arrow which has already been released. It will have to reach its destination, no matter how much you try to prevent it. Even the greatest of men have had to undergo their *prarabdha*; they could not change it.

So, *prarabdha* is unalterable, but the other two types of karmas can be changed. If there are certain *samskaras* in your subconscious mind and you do not want them to fructify, you can immediately remove them if you know the method. You can interfere with your subconscious stuff, you can also interfere with the present karmas in the conscious mind, but you cannot interfere with the *prarabdha* karmas that have to come to you in the form of suffering and enjoyment. If you interfere, they will come back with double force. That is sure and certain.

If you remove the suffering of a man, perhaps by medicine, by yoga or by controlling certain laws of nature, he will be all right for sometime. The *prarabdha* keeps quiet; the whole process goes underground, but the moment the mind is disturbed or the body becomes weak, the suffering comes up again, only it is more intense and keen.

The suffering in life cannot be minimized; however, one thing can be done. The awareness of the suffering can be minimized by elevating the consciousness, by elevating the responses of the mind, by desensitizing some of the brain nerves. The same suffering comes to me now that came to me twenty years ago, but now I do not feel the pain. The

awareness is different. Then I was weeping and crying, and I wanted to commit suicide. Now I am unaffected.

The suffering is the same, the person is the same, but in different periods, under different conditions, it is felt to be more or less. A jivanmukta also suffers due to prarabdha but he does not feel it because he has elevated his consciousness to that height. An ordinary man undergoes the same suffering, but he weeps and cries, and some even commit suicide or lose their mental balance.

If a person becomes sick due to wrong lifestyle and habits, should you try to help him?

You should change his present karma altogether, habits, lifestyle, etc., but do not interfere with the prarabdha, the suffering. It should be allowed to exhaust itself without suppression, then the illness will go away without returning.

What is the origin of prarabdha?

It is very difficult to know from which life prarabdha proceeds. Very few people know this.

Is prarabdha the sum total of your previous karmas?

No, it is not even a part of the sum total. It is the fruit of individual karmas which are ripened and released. Often, some good and some bad karmas fructify so you enjoy and you suffer side by side. You may have a lot of money but you get blood pressure or paralysis. You have many good friends, but at the same time you have many enemies. Each karma is separately rewarded or punished.

Does that mean that when you fall ill yourself, you should not try to treat it?

When I fall ill, I will stop my eating. You may call it treatment or whatever, but it is not interfering with the prarabdha. It is interfering with the karma. That is the difference. I will not do anything to interfere with the prarabdha, because everything in that area is already marked, decided and destined. The

things come up as they have been written. The small man thinks that he is changing these laws, but he is not.

Don't you go to the doctor even when you are ill? Is it because the ashram authorities would not permit you?

Oh no. Ashram authorities do not have any say about it. I stand by my own principles and convictions. Even if I get a bullet in my side, it will remain as it is. I don't mind. I have faith in myself. I have set convictions. I will never go one inch this side or one inch that side, even if the whole ashram is burned down. You must understand it. I have set them for years and years together. I am not like some swamis who go to the hospital. If my bones had been broken, I would have lived under that condition throughout my life. That was one contention I had with my guru throughout my ashram training. I said, "No doctor should enter your room."

I don't like it when somebody talks about a philosophy, but does not practise it. When we know that there is some higher power at work then why do we take a different view in practical life?

As far as prarabdha and destiny are concerned, I have a definite view and vision. I don't care for anybody's logic. I say it because I have a certain realization about it. I may not be able to put forth the truth about destiny in the form of logic, but to me the things are as clear as when I took tea just now. I see them in the same way. Destiny is an absolute law and it is very strict and unalterable. Destiny only concerns certain matters – life and death, good reputation and bad reputation, disease and health, suffering and enjoyment. These eight things are under the control of destiny and everything else is beyond its control.

Whatever has been destined must happen to a certain extent, but always remember that man's destiny is not carved for all times; it differs from individual to individual. In a certain man destiny is chalked out for twenty-five years; that means the blueprint is already made, then you cannot change it. After twenty-five years everything is undecided. I have seen that the

karmas were strictly binding a certain individual for nineteen years. I only knew that at the end of the nineteenth year this particular suffering would finish, but what turn the prarabdha would take from the twentieth year was not yet known. It was still unformed. Those who understand the laws of karma can interfere with the unformed destiny by introducing any method, maybe bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, religion, austerity or anything, but then one should know the karmas.

It is also seen that when the prarabdha is completely formed, then the sufferings are absolutely set. It is something like a man who has committed so many crimes and the punishment is imprisonment for fifteen years, but after that what will be the turn of his prarabdha is unknown, because it has not yet been formed. If one has the understanding of the entire range of karma, it can be seen that after fifteen years a particular type of karma is going to be rewarded in his life. The reward can be anything; that is up to the destiny. We cannot decide it, but we know which type of karma is being considered, and that can still be changed after a day or two, or a month or a year. That is known as *sanchit* or accumulated karma.

So, always remember that the karmas which are being considered, which are not yet fixed, can be changed. Insofar as medical treatment is concerned, that can come under the category of prarabdha in the making, but in my case I have always been true to this conviction, even from the very beginning. In 1944, when I had an attack of TB, my left lung was not functioning, but still I refused to be treated. They wanted to send me to a hospital, but I said, "No. I may die but I will not go to the hospital and get treated." It came to me unconsciously at that time, but now I am conscious.

Due to my condition I had to leave the ashram for some time, so I went to Rishikesh. It was a hopeless place as far as food, shelter and atmosphere were concerned. I used to eat rough rotis, half baked and half unbaked. In three months I was all right. Normally, if you go to a sanatorium, it will take two years to recover from TB. Even if I had a little money, I decided I would not go to a sanatorium. I said to myself, "I

will not take any medicine, but as long as I am alive, I will just eat whatever I can get.”

Everyday I used to eat eighteen to twenty double size rotis with ten to fifteen green chillies. I think it was the green chillies that saved my life. If at all anything could have interfered with my karmas, it was the green chillies. I had so much interest in green chillies that the moment I would start to think about them, I would want to run into the nearest garden and plunder it. Such a *vasana* for green chillies I had, and from that time I have taken them.

It is very difficult to translate the word *vasana*. *Vasana* is endless, but *vasanas* are not endless. When we say *vasana*, we mean the hidden desires, the craving to live, the thirst for life. You want to exist; you do not want to become extinct. Although you want *moksha*, it is true, deep down in your subconscious mind, you do not want to cease to exist. There is a deeper *vasana* in you, to exist forever, for all times, to maintain your individuality in all its complete forms. That is called *vasana*. That *vasana* is endless. When I say that the *samskaras* can be exhausted by *karma*, I mean the *samskaras* that are formed on the bed of *vasana*. *Vasana* is a bed on which the *samskaras* and the *karmas* are formed. Gradually these *karmas* are exhausted by *karmas*. They are annihilated by *karmas*.

Can the old karmas be replaced by new karmas?

Yes, of course. It is not necessarily replacement, but the old *karmas* go away and the new *karmas* come. Every moment we are exhausting *karma*. Even the way we see, the sounds we hear, the way we move, the way we think, all that is exhausting *karma*, but at the same time we are creating *karma* and you create *karma* more by thought than by action. If I ask you to go and kill a man, the *karmas* will rebound on me, not on you, although you are the actual killer.

Another example. A judge in the high court wants to take revenge on a man whose case has just come up for hearing. He passes the final judgement, capital punishment. The order is given and the man is put to death. However,

the karmas will not rebound on the executioner, they will rebound on the judge because he had vengeance.

Again, the judge has no vengeance for the criminal, but one party wants the fellow to be executed, although he may be innocent. The judge quietly observes the proceedings. He knows nothing about the case. The arguments are put in such a way that the man appears to be guilty, although he may be innocent, and he is sentenced to capital punishment. Now, the karmas will not rebound on the judge or on the executioner. They will rebound on the party who conspired against the man through the mind.

So, the karma produced through thought makes a much deeper impression on the mind than the actual karma or deed itself. It is also said in the *Gita*. You may become a farmer or a warrior, you may do any action physically, but that will not produce so many karmas as your thoughts will produce after locking yourself in a room.

You said it was useless to interfere with destiny by giving a sick man medicines to make him healthy, but isn't the practice of yoga a type of interference, because it also makes us healthy?

No, you have misunderstood the point. The purpose of yoga is not to interfere with destiny, but to change the karma before it is reconsidered. Yoga is concerned with the destiny which is still to be formed, not with the destiny that is already formed.

If you break your leg, isn't it better to put it in plaster and let it mend, rather than refusing to do anything about it and becoming an invalid even if that is your destiny?

I can understand your viewpoint, but you will never understand mine. With the viewpoint which you hold, suffering will continue the whole life long, but with my viewpoint suffering will never be nearby. It cannot come, because even the *prarabdha* is afraid of a man who wants it. When you try to keep the *prarabdha* away, it comes again

with redoubled force. That is the law of karma. If you dislike a karma, it will come by force. If you are afraid of illness, it will come much earlier.

Are the established karmas exhausted more quickly in one who is spiritually developed?

It often happens because such persons do not care at all for karmas. They do not worry about where their destiny is going to lead them or how the karmas will affect them. As a result, the process of exhaustion takes place more quickly. To our eyes the suffering may seem more intense, but for them there is no suffering. It is the condition of mind that is responsible for the expression and understanding of pain and pleasure. It is not the pain and pleasure itself that is important.

You have said it is better not to interfere with the prarabdha in cases of illness, but what about the ordinary man, shouldn't he take medicine?

Of course, that is my conviction, but other people will take medicine. One swami here became ill and I said, "No treatment will take place in this ashram. I do not like it. If you want to be treated, you can go to Patna." Death is better than sacrificing one's principles. And if you say, "I will be able to serve humanity better", it is egoism. It is God who is doing everything through us. Who am I to do it? Human beings are born in the world like kernels of corn on the cob. Thousands of people are born and thousands of people die every second.

No, I hold a different view altogether. What will happen if I die or if you die? Nothing will happen. Much better personalities will be born. After all, the world has not produced only one soul to guide humanity. Well, he might say, "I am doing it for you." But I would say, "No, I don't want it." He might say, "That is because your mind is different and you cannot understand the realities. You speak of something very high." Then I would say, "No. I understand the realities better than you do. Let the suffering come. It is better to suffer for the sake of one's principles."

Have you heard the story of Mansur, the great Sufi saint? He used to say, “Anal-haq”, which means, ‘I am the reality’. In Islam they don’t believe that God is within. So, when some of the priests heard him crying, “Anal-haq”, in the morning hours, while they used to say, “Alla hoo”, they asked, “Who is this heretic who says, ‘I am God?’” They called him to court and the Nawab asked, “What are you saying?” Mansur replied, “Anal-haq”.

First they took whips and whipped him a number of times, but Mansur repeated the japa of “Anal-haq” constantly. Then they said, “This man has practised so much japa he is unable to feel the whips. Now peel off his skin.” So they cut his skin and began to peel it off, and what happened at that time? From every nerve came the sound of “Anal-Haq, Anal-Haq, Anal-Haq!” As long as they went on peeling off his skin they could hear the mantra. Mansur sacrificed his life, but he had to do it. That was his conviction.

Before the soul reincarnates and is confronted with a certain destiny, can it refuse to accept that incarnation or must it consent?

No, the soul has no freedom; it has to accept. Only after it has been liberated or partially liberated is it able to choose to some extent. At what point the soul begins to decide its future incarnation is difficult to tell, but, of course, it starts much before the final stage of realization.

How is destiny perceived?

We call destiny *adrishta*, which usually means ‘unseen process’. It is not in the form of what we call mental or thought vibration. It is subtler than that. It is subtler than vision and emanates from the unconscious body, not from the subconscious. Once it emerges from the unconscious, it goes straight up to the conscious mind and manifests in behaviour, in actual life. It will not give you any time to change it. Much of what is in your subconscious can

be changed. As soon as it goes down to the unconscious however, then it is beyond your jurisdiction.

How do the seers of destiny perceive it?

They don't see the destiny. They see the conscious mind and the samskaras going down to the unconscious. Thereby they understand the things to come and if at all they want to interfere, they only interfere with those karmas or samskaras which are going towards the unconscious. They are very alert, but that which is in the unconscious, in the formed state, cannot be exploded out, it is not possible. It can only be exploded directly to the conscious state where we are now and then we start suffering from many diseases and behaviours.

The destiny fulfils itself here and if you silently suffer it the karmas are exhausted. When you do not suffer the destiny calmly, quietly, silently, with dignity and self-respect, and with all the strength at hand, then a new karma is formed, and that karma is brought down to the subconscious plane, where it remains according to its gravity, either in the upper region, in the middle or at the bottom. The heavier it is, the quicker it will sink into the unconscious. There it will again become the prarabdha, again it will be shot forth and again you will start experiencing it.

Is a baby free from karmas and destiny?

No. Even in a baby the subconscious and the unconscious mind are there, but because he has not yet developed the power of reasoning as we have, he does not receive those karmas which are received by our thinking. Still he receives karmas through the senses and through the particular training that is given to him. The karmas go into his subconscious body and then into his unconscious body.

If one interferes with the destiny of another, what does he undergo?

It is said in tantra shastra that one who interferes with the karmas of another, takes those karmas on himself. He also

makes the other man suffer the same karmas equally. The karmas are split into two. It is something like two people committing murder – both receive capital punishment.

One day a lady bowed and touched the left foot of somebody, and that person had the whole left side of his body paralyzed from that day. It was revealed to him that this was because of the karmas of that lady. Why does he have to suffer when he did not even do anything to take the karmas?

Yes, he received the disease, it is possible. However, the lady will also continue to suffer for some time. It depends on her development. If she is spiritually advanced and she has decided to change her behaviour, there is the possibility of complete elimination of the karma, but if she continues in the same way, she is bound to suffer again due to the other karmas. As far as the man is concerned, he has received the suffering, but he will not suffer it, because his state of mind is different. If the mind does not suffer, the body also will not suffer.

Very often a saint or a guru takes on the karma of his disciples. How is this possible?

The powerful souls, not all souls, can take upon themselves some of the karmas of the disciples. It is done by will, but they can only take the *kriyatman*, present, karmas and the *sanchit*, accumulated, karmas; those which are still being processed, which are not in the form of vibrations. Saints like Swami Sivananda and Ramana Maharshi were able to take on the karmas of their disciples.

What is the proof of this?

As far as proof goes, it is purely individual and, in most cases, it is very difficult to ascertain it. You see a man suffering one moment and the next moment that suffering is transferred to another man. There is no greater proof than that. As he said, the lady was suffering and the moment she touched the left foot of the man, she was all right and he started suffering. That is the proof.

When you are discussing the karma of a person, you are discussing the widest range of his life, every moment of his life and of his past lives. It is not just a few karmas. It includes his thoughts, his behaviour, his breathing, his movements, his physical work, his subconscious impressions, in his life here and hereafter. Millions and millions of minute vibrations must be taken into account to denote one act. How are they classified? One karma is supposed to be the smallest unit and there are billions of those units within the microcosmic body.

Now, all these units are put into three compartments for the time being. There are the karmas in the storeroom, the karmas being sown in the field and the karmas being harvested. I remember Swami Sivananda used to say that karmas are exactly like seeds. A farmer has a bag of seeds. He puts most of the seeds into storage because he does not require them for his next harvest and a few of the seeds he sows into the ground. Then he waits for two or three months until the harvest comes. In the meanwhile, what does he do? He goes to a new plot and prepares the ground for the next crop.

As far as the harvest is concerned, he has to reap it when it is ready. As far as the newly cultivated plot is concerned, he can put in any seeds and harvest it after some time. And as far as the seeds in the store are concerned, that is up to him. He can do whatever he likes with them. This is the exact classification of karma. Karma is not only action. The entire store of karmas which have been done by me in millions of lifetimes are all classified into three groups: there are the seed stock, the seeds for sowing and the harvested crop.

Now, the harvest group is the destiny. You can forget about it. There is no use in discussing it. It is beyond you and me. Even the master of destiny who has created it cannot change it. Before the sowing of the seed takes place, there are certain changes which can be made. You may take medicine, you may practise yoga, you may restrict your diet or regulate your lifestyle. You can do whatever you want.

So we can decide the future harvest?

Yes, before they are sown, you can destroy the seeds and put in new seeds altogether. Only the harvest, the standing crop is unalterable.

Can you not make a fire and burn the whole crop?

Yes, but how much detachment is required for that? You have been tilling the land for so many years at the cost of so much suffering, labour and pain. Now, when the crop is standing ready to harvest, you want to take a match to it. What madman would do it? Only a man who is realized, who thinks in that way, can do it. A mad man who is a divine man can think, "What is the use of this harvest? I would have to reap it, eat it, sow it again, reap it again, eat it again." He can take petroleum to the field and burn it.

If that is the conviction, if that is the fundamental and unchangeable idea, then of course all the karmas and even the destiny can be burnt at one glance. It is said in *Gita*, "Even as the fire burns the entire stock of wood, in the same way, the fire of jnana burns the entire stock of karma (sarvakarmani)." All the karmas can be burned, not only the prarabdha karma but the sanchit and the kriyatman karmas; the present actions, the stock of actions and the actions for reaping. All the karmas can be burned, but for that, one must have attained jnana.

Jnana is not knowledge derived from the Upanishads, Bible, or Koran. That knowledge is the perception of truth in all that you see, the realization of a permanent being behind the impermanent things that we see now – that is called *vairagya*. Leaving the whole family, wife and children, is the lower *vairagya*. I am not criticising it. To leave the material life and take up a life of austerity and sacrifice, like monks and nuns, that is not bad, but it is the lower *vairagya*, pertaining to the senses. The higher *vairagya*, which is called *para vairagya*, is the transcendental *vairagya*. When this form of detachment dawns everything in life appears a bit nonsensical.

Is taking sannyasa not the replacement of one enjoyment by another?

No, the vairagya is there. However, it is not necessary that all who take sannyasa do so because of vairagya. People have different backgrounds. This ultimate vairagya is not possible for everybody to attain. One in a million may be able to do it. In *Gita* it is written that one out of thousands develops this attitude, and out of those, rarely one actually succeeds in achieving the para vairagya. To attain the supreme fire, as they call it, by which you are able to burn the whole harvest, is not an ordinary job. It is easier to reap the harvest and suffer than to fight to attain vairagya at every moment. We say the whole world is unreal. Then it says to us, "I am real, don't you see me? I am very real." We have no answer to it.

After burning the whole harvest in this way can one go on living in the world and continue working?

No, then the next harvest is going to become ready.

Is suicide to be compared with burning of the harvest?

No. There is no spiritual or logical explanation for suicide. No spiritual man will commit suicide.

What is the use of maintaining this body after burning all the karmas?

After burning one stock, the next becomes ready. It is just sown. When one has burnt all the prarabdhas through vairagya, there is nothing more to reach.

Can one who has burned all the karmas come back?

He is videhamukti; he cannot come back. A man who thinks that the world is unreal, what has he got to do with the world?

Then we must accept our destiny as long as we want to live in the world and help mankind?

It is a very difficult thing. My personal opinion is that, when the sufferings come to you in any form, you should accept

them as a challenge and try to maintain steadiness of mind, intelligence and judgement. If the suffering is terrible, then it is more necessary to elevate the condition of the mind than to interfere with the body. One has to elevate the mind only, and nothing else. If the sufferings are so intense that one is unable to bear them, then one must suffer them with the spirit of total surrender, resignation and patience, not with the view of getting better, but with a view to resign, surrender and be patient in the name of the Supreme Being, God or Purusha.

If one says, "I have got a headache." I say, "Do not take medicines. Practise surrender, resignation and patience." People can never understand my view, even the greatest of men, but always remember, each and every individual has the right to his own opinion. I think that I should be able to bear all the difficulties in life with the same spirit and that is the path of the gods, not the path of ordinary men. All the scriptures on bhakti speak of surrender, resignation and patience. It is the sum total of what they had to say. Were they all wrong? Well, logically maybe, but not as far as reality is concerned. I think there must have been some reason behind what they said. The people who wrote the scriptures were not unreliable people. How can we disbelieve them?

It is better to have a greater understanding of these people whom history has accepted as saints, in spite of their being very ordinary people: a carpenter boy, a weaver, a butcher. History has recognized them and their names are repeated every day throughout India. They are the people who have spoken the truth, not the doctors, the philosophers, the politicians, the statesmen, the learned professors in philosophy and psychology – no, never.

The ultimate truth is always spoken by the seers and saints who have come in different countries, times and with different names, but with one voice. A political group in Europe might have exploited the name of Christ and organized Christianity. In India we have exploited Buddha's name and organized Buddhism. That is a different matter altogether. I think they have both said the same thing. We must have one principle in

life. Well, my principle is surrender, resignation and patience, because that is what I have learned from them.

You can have your own principle. Why decide what is greater, destiny or karma, or this or that! Everybody should have some strict principle in his life. You must say, “No, I surrender to God. Let His will be done.” Then you must practise it from moment to moment. You might fail. I have failed a number of times. It is not possible to be one hundred percent true to one’s convictions and I am aware of it, but still I should practise it, because I know that the trial will come and at that time I must also try my best to practise it at every moment.

You must have tremendous willpower to do this?

I can tell you very frankly that I have no great willpower. I have never tried it on anyone. I do not try my willpower on a sick man. I do not try it on an evil man. Moreover, I do not believe in it. I preach it, but I believe in the will of God, not in the will of man. I must speak about philosophy to you, but in my heart I am a different man altogether. I put out all these psychologies and philosophies. The will of the Lord reigns supreme and this will goes on through me and through you. If you stop tomorrow, do not practise anything, you will find that in three months God will teach you everything, because He is a greater teacher than myself.

How do you know the will of God?

I do not know the will of God. I surrender, I resign, I let it be, that is all. Everything that happens is the will of God.

Is it a philosophy?

No, I do not know what it is.

Is this training course also the will of God?

It is not my prarabdha to give this course, it is the will of God. So far as the emergence of some of the people here, it is the Divine will.

God, Reality and Mother

30 September 1967

What does it mean to say God is Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva?

This is a very personal question. Everyone must decide for himself what is meant by God. My views about God and reality I reserve only for myself, because they will not be agreeable to you. So, I will discuss the matter as it has been generally presented in the scriptures.

In most of the scriptures it says that God is one: the creator, preserver and destroyer, and everything that exists is created by Him. However, the Upanishads do not speak about God as such. They say that there is supreme energy known as *sat*, existence, *chit*, consciousness and *anandam*, bliss. These three aspects are found in everywhere, in everything. This is the Cosmic Force which is called *Brahman*, impersonal reality. They do not speak of a personal God. Buddha never talked about God. The Jains do not talk about God. They just believe in morality, leading a good life, that is all.

The great logicians, the vedantins, said, "We do not know whether there is a God or not. Let us prove that God exists." So, they went on trying to prove it logically and theoretically. The vedantins came to understand that behind all that exists in the world, there is some unseen and unapprehensible reality. You can never see it with your eyes or grasp it with your mind, but you can tune in with it when the intellect, the

senses and all other functions of the personality are subdued, and you are reduced to an atomic structure. At that time you can comprehend the reality as a whole; you have the realization of the whole. It is a very difficult concept and first of all some study has to be done into the nature of reality.

Personally, I feel that the Upanishads do not speak of God, but of reality. The word 'God' has to be replaced by many of the thinking intellectuals. 'God is non-existent' is the concept of people who cannot think a little bit higher. Radhakrishnan, Einstein, Newton – these were the men whose intellectual powers and spiritual intuition were so highly developed that their concept of God was completely different. A person who is unable to think about deeper matters believes that there is a God in a church, in a temple, in a stone image or in a picture. His whole concept ends there, but when he goes deep into spiritual science he thinks that God is a reality. This is how the Upanishads see God. Brahman is reality and maya is appearance.

In the Upanishads, these two topics are discussed again and again from different angles. Reality and appearance are like two sides of a coin. When you are observing one side, the other side is not seen. That is why it is difficult for anyone to understand what God is just by asking someone else. If you believe in God, then you believe. If you do not believe, but you want to find out whether God exists or not, then you must make a thorough study. If you believe in God as a personal deity, then go ahead with that. If you believe that God is reality, you should stick to it. If you think that God is not reality, you will have to shake that thought.

In the *Mahabharata*, it is said that "Creation is equal to reality and reality is equal to creation." There is no difference between the creator and the created. Hindus and Christians believe that there is a creator. The moment we accept that there is creator, we have to accept that there was a first day of creation. When we accept that we make a mathematical mistake, because non-creation is also a state of being. So, the Upanishads say that the cosmos was never created. It is

eternal. There was never a creator and the world will never be destroyed.

What about the kalpas, the creator's day and night, and the period of pralaya?

Pralaya is not destruction. *Laya* means 'momentary suspension'. The creative aspect of reality or the process of creation is suspended for the time being. Matter is disintegrated. The atomic or the final structure of the universe becomes the elementary structure of the universe. The elementary structure becomes one with the supreme cosmos. There is no distinction.

In Upanishadic philosophy, it is believed that the body is also ultimately indestructible. The soul is indestructible, of course, but they say that the body is too. It not only exists as a body; the earth and the planets also exist not only as a body, but as components. You cannot destroy them. There is no destruction, only a process of disintegration. So, the word *pralaya*, is used for disintegration and suspension, not for destruction.

Were Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and others compelled to come down to earth and work in society again, not by their own karmas, but due to the natural flow of love or compassion?

Yes. Buddha, Christ and Mohammed did not have any karmas. That is why we call them sons of God or incarnations of God. There are two types of human beings: one who is ascending the steps of evolution and the other who has descended from the supreme heights of evolution. Those who have descended from divinity are known as incarnations, prophets or avatars.

Avatara, the Indian term, literally means 'descending'. They came down because it was the will of God. Strictly speaking, they were not 'compelled' to come down because they had become one with that will. In some previous life, they had a state of oneness with the divine flow and the

eternal compassion of God flowed through them. Then they descended only once. Due to cosmic compassion, they could not keep away from this suffering humanity and so their descent was not an obligation, but a natural flow.

These avatars retired from society for a while and, when they were free from all the personal bondages, they found that they were, in fact, not ascending, but that they had descended. At the same time, they had to perform some kind of *lila*, or play. All great men play their part perfectly, so that we can follow them. It was not necessary for Buddha, Christ or Mahavir to do so many austerities. They practiced them to give us a guideline, an example.

In the Hindu scriptures it is said that avatars like Rama and Krishna came to the world and worked, not in order to purify their karmas, because they were divinities and had no karmas, but they did it for the divine *lila*.

What is the status of the mother according to Indian tradition?

Motherly love is considered to be divine. Mother and child are unconsciously connected, as are guru and disciple. According to Hindu belief, mother is the first guru or god. Husband, father or brother can all be replaced, but not the mother. The attachment between mother and child does not belong to the lower category; it is a very great attachment. Not all are able to practice it.

When Shankaracharya, at the age of eight, was crossing a small river, a crocodile caught hold of his leg and he could not escape. His mother was also with him, so he called out to her, "Mother, give me permission to take *sannyasa*, otherwise this crocodile will finish me." According to Indian tradition, when it is known that the son will not survive, he is allowed to take *sannyasa*. If the son has that temperament, he prefers to die a *sannyasin*.

Shankara had already tried to take *sannyasa* when he was six years old, but his mother would not give him permission and he had to obey her. However, when she saw her son

in the jaws of a crocodile she thought, if she allowed him to take sannyasa, at least he would survive somewhere. So she agreed. This was what Shankara had been waiting for. As soon as he received his mother's permission to take sannyasa, the crocodile left him. Then Shankara requested his mother to go back home and he proceeded to the ashram of his guru.

According to Hindu tradition, sannyasins are not allowed to join any ceremony, funeral or meeting of condolence, not because they do not believe in them, but because they have no business there. However, when Shankara's mother was dying, a message was sent to him. He was with her when she died and he conducted all the funeral ceremonies required by the tradition. Then he went away.

Some of the brahmins of this community criticized him for this. They said that sannyasins are not supposed to attend funeral ceremonies and they objected to him touching the dead body. Shankara said, "No. According to scriptural authority, a sannyasin can attend to all of his mother's obsequies." So that is the status of the mother, even in the life of a sannyasin. Before the age of ten, a female is not regarded as a mother, but after ten years, she is to be called mother. That is the rule.



43

The Subconscious Mind

7 October 1967

How can we make better use of the subconscious mind?

One can give messages, orders or questions to the subconscious mind. After having solved the problem during sleep, it sends the solution back to the conscious mind. If you have a question, you don't have to worry about the reply. Just sit down quietly and think about the reply. You do not actually have to pose any answer; just close the eyes and begin to practice concentration. Stop all the thoughts that come to your mind except those related to the question. It is very easy, only a matter of practice. When the mind is on the verge of concentration, when the conscious mind is blinking and the state of drowsiness sets in, at that time you should think about the question.

You should know the technique of attaining that state of awareness where the mind is half awake and half asleep, where you are able to see visions. That is the state you want to be in when you pose the question and continue to think about it. Usually the reply comes very quickly and it comes in the form of symbols or in the form of some inspiration. There are so many ways in which it can come.

Do we have to know how to interpret the symbols?

Yes and that takes a little time. One gets used to it with practice. Everyone has their own symbology. At first it is

difficult to understand the messages, but still you should go on trying to interpret them. If you see a symbol, say a dog running, you have to try to find out what that means, whether it is positive or negative. You have to understand your own symbols. Some are common and some are not.

From where does the mind get its solutions to these questions?

The subconscious mind knows everything, because it is able to connect itself with the past, present and future. It has this power. William James, a great English writer, wrote that, "In comparison to what we ought to be, we are half awake. Much of our personality and intelligence are under the bed." If only we could tap some of the energy and resources of this submerged consciousness, we could become anything in the world.

So far, everything that we do in life: eating, drinking, working, thinking, understanding, is through the conscious mind. Suppose you want to go to the market. You know that you must have some money, that you have to go by car or rickshaw, and that you must know the way. That is all the function of the conscious mind, not the subconscious. The subconscious mind functions in the form of symbols and vibrations. In dreams, the subconscious mind is functioning. The subconscious is psychic.

The female brain can express and understand the subconscious language better than the male brain. Female saints, throughout the world, have been able to read auras better than male saints. In order to become psychic, the masculine brain has to become as soft as that of the female. I am talking about the physical and the psychic structure: this change has to be brought about in both. Women have to do a little sadhana and men have to do much more. If men want to get down to the ground floor, they have to take ten steps, but women are already there.

Therefore, you will find throughout the world it is women who are inclined towards the religious path. In the ashrams in India, in all public charities, hospitals and orphanages,

women are the leading donors. They are very psychic. It is not true that a woman must become a man before realization can be attained. In the *Gita* it says anyone can have realization.

First, you should try to function on the subconscious plane for some time. How one functions and what is the language on the subconscious plane can be known if you study your dreams daily. Dreams are expressions of the subconscious mind. Everyone has dreams, only madmen do not. It is just that sometimes we forget our dreams and think that we have not had any for a long time.

One day, I was walking along a mountain road. A little ahead of me I saw a cobra passing through the woods. I stood there and it came to my mind that this was not the first time that it had happened. This had already happened before, but when had it happened? This incident had taken place twice in my life. Then it came to me that I had dreamt it, but I didn't remember the dream. This has happened to me a number of times and always in connection with a snake.

What does the snake signify?

According to Freud and others, the snake signifies the suppressed sexual emotions, but according to dream symbology, the snake can mean a stomach disorder, worms in the stomach. According to yoga and tantra, the snake represents the spiritual force.

Can sexual emotions be sublimated from the subconscious state?

No, sex cannot be sublimated from the subconscious state. First you have to make it conscious and then you can work on it. You must know you have it. There are some people who are not aware of it. If you tell them that they have sexual instinct, they say, "No, I don't have it." They will deny it outright, but there are others who know that they have this urge and are aware if it is too strong or too weak. They can subdue it.

There should be awareness and that is why it is said in the old books that it is always better to renounce and practise brahmacharya after one has gone through the stage of householder life. There are less chances of mental derangement, because sexual energy is a tremendous potential energy. So it has to be controlled very systematically, very correctly, with utmost restraint. Unless one is Christ or Shankaracharya, it is always better to go through the proper channels.

Is this also true for other complexes such as fear?

Yes. Whenever you want to get rid of a particular complex, you must be aware of it and accept it. You must feel the pains and tortures. For example, if you are aware that you are full of jealousy, then you can try to get rid of it through yogic methods, but if you are not aware of the instinct, the mental error, and I give you a certain kriya to correct it, the kriya will not do any good.

Are there special kriyas for this?

No. In yoga there are no special practices because yoga treats the mind and not the complexes.

What should you do if you observe that you are full of tensions inside yourself? They may be psychic, but you don't know the reason for them.

You have find out. Fundamentally, tensions are due to two factors: desire and frustration. This is the basis for all tension. If you have no desires or frustrations, you will never have any tensions. Now, what is this desire? How many are there? These desires are for wealth, women, progeny, etc. Then you must decide where you are frustrated. The desires and the frustration related to them must be known. Usually it is the marital relations or emotional attachments that are causing your frustration. Sometimes it is the lack of money and property.

If you accept that you have a desire for money, you must find out why you have failed to obtain it. Once you have

found out the cause of your tension, the moment you think of that point, you will feel something happening to you. If passion, greed or anything else is the cause, the moment you think about it, you will feel the whole thing relaxing. You will feel a change in yourself. It is something like a doctor operating on the body. When he comes to the exact point, he stops his hand there.

Generally, you do not know what the cause of the tension is. Someone comes and you get angry with them. It is not the person who is the cause of the tension. The cause may be anything, but if you think about it quietly and someone comes to your mind, and you think about your relations with that person, then you feel some change taking place in you. At that time you feel yourself becoming softer and softer, and if you are not cruel or hard, you will start crying. Some kind of release takes place in the chest and you feel relaxed. It is very difficult to analyze oneself, but you should start from the basic factors. Do not worry about the events because tension can never take place without desire and frustration.

Do you plan to introduce yoga into education?

We are going to introduce yoga into education, but the blueprint is not ready yet. We have started experimentally introducing asanas and pranayama into all the higher secondary schools in India. The Ministry of Education has passed the bill and it is now up to the states to implement it. For example, the Punjab government has accepted yoga. They give government grants and have their own yoga centres and directors. Other provinces will do the same.

The central government has selected a set of twenty-one asanas and pranayama on which laboratory experiments have been done, and now manuals have been published saying what these practices are good for and how they are done. The government has given large grants for the study of yoga in Bombay, for example. Swami Kuvalyananda was the chief founder and director of the work. He is dead now,

but experiments have been conducted on yoga there for about thirty years.

We find that, wherever yogasanas and pranayama are introduced, the enthusiasm is tremendous. Students do not like drills and marching because they have no interest in them, but when you teach them asanas and pranayama, they are very keen to learn the different practices and to see who can do them the best. They are also suffering from different problems and yoga gives them some relief, so they like it. There is a lot of interest throughout India, even the Christian convents and Parsee charities have accepted it. In Sagar University in central India there is a special degree course: three years for a BA in yoga and two more for an MA in yoga. They are learning everything that we are here, except, of course, kriya yoga. I was one of the members of the board of executives there for a number of years.

Yoga as a thesis subject has been approved throughout India. You can get a PhD in yoga. One such degree will be obtained by Prof. Inderpal Sachdev who wrote a book called *Yoga and Psychology*. The only point now is how to make it practical for the common man. A number of people like Dr T.M.P. Mahadevan, head of the department of philosophy at Madras University, and Dr B.L. Atrya, head of the department of philosophy at Benares University, have written good books on yoga. However, when it comes to the question of practice, how to answer it?

For the time being, asanas and pranayamas are being presented because we don't know exactly how meditation is to be taught on a large scale to thousands of people. It is not possible for India to ever preach religion through a government regime. India has never done it and will never do it. The government must remain secular, but yoga is not a religion and it can be taught safely in colleges and schools.

44

Seclusion

17 October 1967

What is the meaning and what are the advantages of seclusion with a spiritual purpose?

If you retire into seclusion with a spiritual purpose it is intended to avoid the unwanted and unnecessary association with the society and the family. That is the purpose. There are so many things in society which we do not like, which we do not want to do, but still we have to do them, because we are part of it. So people retire into seclusion to avoid all these things and to practise sadhana earnestly. The advantages of seclusion, so far as spiritual practices are concerned, are supreme. Even someone who is not spiritually evolved will make quick progress if they go into seclusion under the guidance of a guru with a definite program in hand. In seclusion the spiritual progress that would normally take six years takes six months.

What are the different kinds of reactions that take place when a sadhaka is in seclusion for a very long time?

That is a very difficult question. The reactions are so diverse. When a sadhaka is in seclusion for many years without meeting anyone, if he is a sincere aspirant, the world becomes almost non-existent for him. All the values are lost and the subconscious mind becomes very powerful.

All the things one usually sees in life, one can see within oneself.

However, the reactions of each sadhaka are different and it is hard to generalize. If the sadhaka is earnest, seclusion gives him so much energy that he can practise sadhana for hours together without any exhaustion or depression, without any difficulties at all. Swami Sivananda said that, while living a secluded life, he used to chant *Om* out loud at night and he had so much energy. In the dead of night he would go out of his kutir and stand in the Ganga which is icy cold. There, he used to do japa and come back full of energy.

However, there are many sadhus who go into seclusion without a sadhana and after a few days they cannot stand it any longer. There was a sadhaka who went to Gangotri, high up in the mountains. He used to live on potatoes and khichari only once a day. Suddenly he felt that his whole spinal cord was full of heat and visions of all dimensions came to him. He was aware of the outer world and the inner visions at the same time, and he could not manage it. It was too much for him. He thought perhaps he had gone mad and he had to leave.

It depends on the sadhaka. There are some spiritual aspirants who are all right as long as they are in society, but the moment they retire into seclusion, fear creeps in. All kinds of insecurities, passions, every damned and blessed thing comes into the mind. They become so confused and afraid that they come out of seclusion and go back into society.

Once I went into seclusion in Rishikesh for three months. I had a program. I knew what to do, japa and dhyana, but still I could not do it. Lethargy and indolence took over because I was not prepared for seclusion. In the morning I would take my mala and go to sleep. When it was nine o'clock I used to go out to the kshetra for my rotis. Then I would come back, take my *Brahma Sutras*, start one sutra and fall asleep. I'd get up at three o'clock, take a bath, go for rotis. When I came back, I would take my mala and sleep! I knew what I had to do, but I could not do it.

Different reactions take place according to the individual's stage of evolution. Great saints like Christ, Buddha, Mohammed and Mahavira, went into seclusion before their self-realization. Remember, if you are very keen about self-realization, some time has to be spent in seclusion, in absolute silence. There you have enough time to see yourself and you are not compelled to see other people.

In seclusion and silence you are nearer to yourself. However, the seclusion must be complete. Some sadhus I have come across retire from their homes and have a building in Rishikesh and another in Gangotri or Haridwar. They have a servant who cooks for them and an account in the bank. They themselves go to the shops and choose their vegetables and sometimes, if a mahatma comes to the district, they go to visit him. This is not seclusion.

Seclusion means cooking your food yourself and trying to avoid the company of other people as much as possible. Just as a thief moves in the dark and avoids the contact of policemen, in the same way, one must check the socializing tendencies of the mind to meet and exchange greetings. If you go to stay at Gangotri you will know what I mean. I was there for nine months.

One day I went to see a mahatma. He was sitting quietly and I stood expecting him to call me, but he did not. After a while I said, "I have just arrived here." He said, "Don't waste your time here. Go back to your own place. I am not interested in you." This is the sort of attitude one must have in seclusion. These mahatmas never meet anyone. There was another mahatma who was very old and when people used to come to Gangotri on pilgrimage his disciples would carry him up higher until they left and then bring him down again.

Seclusion has to be done as a stage of sadhana. Much of Christ's life is not recorded, but he did retire for forty days into the wilderness. Buddha retired for some years and Mohammed and Mahavira went into the mountains. In the *Gita* it is also said that you should try to enjoy seclusion and keep yourself away from the company of any kind of person.

Does chitta become still through a long period of seclusion and silence?

Yes, it does. The physical activity of the brain becomes absolutely calm. The brain's physical movements and vibrations caused by the influx of blood and fluctuating rhythms of the lungs and heart, change in normal conditions due to thoughts, physical movements, different kinds of exertion. That is completely avoided when you go into silence and seclusion. You find that your taste for life becomes extremely weak. However, there is something else, I can tell you with absolute authority, that even after fifty years of silence and seclusion, everything in life can become weak, but not the will of God. Buddha had to come down to earth and so did Christ, Mahavira and many others. They had to work hard in society, but not before leaving it for a period of solitude.

Going into seclusion is something like sending your car to the workshop and not using it for a while. You find it needs an overhaul, so you let the machine cool down. You clean it part by part, lubricate it, and then try it out on the side roads. When you are sure that the brakes work properly and all is in order, then you take it on the main roads. In the same way, the mind, the body, the senses and maybe all the other parts that you do not know about, need a thorough repair and overhaul.

How do you know when you need an overhaul? When you find the *vikaras*, the psychic errors, coming up without you wanting them. When the body needs an overhaul and a rest, you find that even though you are eating well, there is something wrong with the body, you feel exhausted. So, when the body, mind and senses are in a bad condition, the wisest thing to do, even for an ordinary person, is to send the car to the workshop for repair. If you want the car not only to be repaired, but to be made fully automatic as well, it takes more time. The manufacturers have to fit new parts and the car has to stay longer at the workshop.

For normal purposes, fifteen days of complete seclusion will do. Anyone can try it and it will make a great difference

to their health, both physical and mental. For higher spiritual purposes, there should be a longer period of silence and seclusion.

By going into seclusion for a long period, can we reveal our unconscious personality?

Yes, I think it is the only way. There are other advantages also. During a long period of seclusion you are able to practise your kriyas uninterrupted, without the body becoming tired, whereas in day-to-day life, you go to work, come home late at night, go to parties, and early in the morning you get up to practise your kriyas. You try so hard, but it is a form of exhaustion. In seclusion, however, it is different. You can get up with ease at two am and practise your sadhana up to eight o'clock. Then perhaps you are tired, so you take a little walk and rest and start again at ten o'clock.

As a result of your practice, the conscious personality becomes more introverted, and the subconscious personality is expressed in the form of visions and other experiences. Ultimately the unconscious personality reveals itself. The emergence of the unconscious is the same as the awakening of samadhi. It is known as jada samadhi. You sit in one asana for a number of hours in the unconscious state. There is a time limit decided by yourself, just as you automatically wake up after so many hours of sleep.

By and by you can prolong the duration of jada samadhi for as long as forty days. During the reign of the emperor Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, a great saint called Asanta went into samadhi for forty days and the Maharaja witnessed it. For all that time he maintained his unconscious personality by completely subduing his subconscious personality.

During a long period of seclusion, can one attain samadhi by continually witnessing the thoughts?

Yes. In seclusion you will find that thoughts gradually diminish. Ultimately you will not be at all interested in

thinking. It is not that you check the thoughts, but you are just not interested in them. You feel quiet, and then the unconscious comes. It is a state of mind that lasts for a certain period of time. Paramahansa Ramakrishna would often be unconscious for six days, sitting in exactly the same position. After that his disciples would sing kirtan before him and he would get up, otherwise he would not.

Similarly, there was an avadhoot who used to sit by the river in samadhi for days at a stretch. He would not be disturbed or awoken by any sound, even if a train passed by, but if two people sat down beside him and began to talk about Brahma vidya, he would immediately open his eyes. His unconscious personality was so conscious of these things that his samadhi would break at once.

Can one gain ritambhara prajna (wisdom of the secret cosmic laws) by this practice?

Seclusion is not a practice, nor is mouna. They are the means to create a powerful atmosphere in order to practise kriya yoga, nada yoga, trataka, meditation or anushthana. You may decide to do ten million *Gayatri* repetitions in so many days; that is a practice. So, silence and seclusion are the means, the arrangements you make in order to keep the body, mind and senses free from the disturbances which are unavoidable in society.

Can we practise mouna for more than twenty days provided that there is no physical or mental work to do?

Yes, why not? I will put you in your room and lock it from outside. Someone will bring your food and leave it there. You won't show your face to anyone. You will get up at two am, take a shower and then begin. That is complete mouna, complete seclusion; no social or public appearance is made whatsoever. Food is brought to your door and you have to take it whatever it is. If you are still hungry, it does not matter. You have to check your natural tendencies and only go to the toilet twice a day. No physical or mental work

should be done that has a disturbing effect on the lungs, heart, nervous system, brain and senses.

In seclusion there must be some kind of program, because there is no one to check up on you. The first important provision is to be able to sit in one asana for three hours. For the first four or five days, whenever you close your eyes, sleep will overpower you, but after that, sleep will gradually be reduced. It might come down to as little as two or three hours a day.

Can you tell us about some of your experiences in seclusion?

When I was practising pranayama in silence and seclusion in Gangotri, I had a different kind of experience. The way I used to hear the sound of the river was not the same as the sounds I hear now. If any bird made a sound, even in the dead of night, I would hear it from a distance of two or three miles. My senses became so keen that from inside the room I knew in which direction the wind was blowing; I could tell, not by feeling it, but by sensing the vibrations from the walls. My sense of smell was so sharp that I could tell when the mahatma who lived half a mile away put water on the fire to boil his potatoes. I could smell him mashing them and adding brown sugar.

My sense of sight also became more developed. At night, when I looked out of my window, I could see far away, how high the snow had come and which stone had been submerged. Now it is not possible for me to see so far, but my eyesight improved a great deal at that time. At present I think in the form of thought, just imagination without images, but then images used to form themselves. Whatever I used to think in my mind would come to me like a film. Once I was thinking about the mythological descent of Ganga and the image came to me so clearly that I could actually see a man with broad shoulders, King Bhagirath, and the flow of water falling on him. It was not a thought, but a vision in the form of a true image.

That is the effect of silence and seclusion. The mind has a very great capacity, but in society we use it up in so many different ways. We are using our energy from moment to moment. If you write down in a notebook how you are spending your mental energy you will find that from morning until night, from the time when you get up until the time when you go to bed, you are doing nothing but expending energy. That same mental energy is conserved during long periods of silence and seclusion. During that period nothing is earned from outside, but you are saving what is already within you.

What happens once you have saved it? Saving in itself is a very great thing, because whatever we earn tends to leave us again. We are so accustomed to this process. For every little thing, we use a lot of our brainpower without realizing it, because it seems to require no effort. We are most unscientific in our use of energy. It is like playing a tape recorder when the battery is flat. We are not receiving sufficient energy. However, there are some people who have found the perennial source of energy and are connected to it. In order to tap that perennial source, you must retire into seclusion, otherwise it is not possible.

So, when you know where the source of energy is, you try to plug yourself into it and emerge like Buddha or Mahavira with a tremendous capacity for work. Alternatively, the moment your battery is discharged, you can go to a recharging station like Bihar School of Yoga and come back refreshed.

Do we exhaust more energy when we use the intelligence?

When we train our intelligence we charge it. It is like boosting your cooler. Under low voltage it does not work properly, but when you put in the booster it consumes more energy and thereby works more efficiently. In the same way, intelligence is trained by expending more energy and at the same time we are exhausting our karma a little bit quicker. This is the scientific approach to using our energy in a positive manner.

Without energy, the intelligence will not function. What is intelligence? It is a muscle, a centre, a circuit, a cell, a point in the body that is charged with extra energy. You supply more energy so that one part of the intelligence is connected to another part. Everyone has intelligence, but a diplomat has a little more than a labourer because he is able to synchronize the functioning of both hemispheres of the brain simultaneously.

To combine the activity of two brain cells more energy is needed. That is why there are more mental failures among very intelligent people than among manual workers. All the brain disasters come from this class of people – the professors, the mathematicians, scientists, engineers. You will never find a truck driver or a farmer in a mental asylum because they always have surplus energy. Professional people work so hard with their brains that they ultimately use up all their energy and then the intelligence suffers. They are unable to establish an intellectual equilibrium and they go mad.

John F. Kennedy published a plan in *Time* magazine to make compulsory sanatoria for everyone. He said that mental failures in the USA were due to extra work, stress and strain which put an excessive burden on the nervous system. People had gone beyond attacks of nervousness and neurasthenia, and it had got to the point where the brain simply refused to work. These sanatoria were to be for people to stay in once a year compulsorily with no work, just resting, eating well and forgetting everything to do with intelligence.

45

Sleep

18 October 1967

What is the secret behind sleep?

Sleep is due to the formation of carbon in the system. When the body tries to get rid of the carbon a certain state is essential and that is known as sleep.

How is the body revitalized by sleep?

Firstly, it is revitalized because the lungs and heart work normally, but no toxins are produced due to the absence of activity in the body and, secondly, because the cells have time to be repaired. In yoga it is said that during sleep the soul rests in the subconscious body and then it takes all the samskaras and experiences, and stores them in the unconscious body.

What type of pranic phenomena take place during deep sleep?

When you are asleep the pranas are brought down, in certain cases to anahata and in other cases to vishuddhi, and there is the experience of dream or complete unconsciousness accordingly. In those who are highly evolved, the prana rests, not in anahata or vishuddhi, but in sahasrara during deep sleep and in ajna during dreams and visions. It differs according to the state of evolution. At the physiological

level, the influx of blood is reduced and the flow of pranic energy through the spinal cord to the nerves is momentarily suspended. The entire pranic consciousness withdraws itself from all sources of the body and is almost paralyzed or disconnected.

On what plane do we move during deep sleep?

We don't move through any plane, but we move into our unconscious body and just remain there.

What are the fundamental conditions for sound sleep?

Practise pranayama. Avoid sleeping just when you feel like it. Only sleep at night and not for more than six hours at any cost.

How can we minimize our sleeping hours?

It can be done gradually with practice, but if you want to minimize your sleeping hours, you have to minimize your food intake also. That is very important otherwise you may be able to sleep less by willpower, but you will feel heavy. There will be gases in the body, the tongue will be coated and the liver affected.

Can one live with one or two hours of sleep daily for a whole lifetime? How should one prepare for that?

Yes, it is possible. You need a very thin body and you must eat only once a day. You should not take much water either or move around much or read books. You must be capable of sitting unconscious with the eyes closed for three to six hours or more, but always remember that, unless you have attained samadhi, trying to live on two hours of sleep by willpower is laying yourself open to psychic dangers. So, first of all attain samadhi and then even sleep is not required. Samadhi is complete rest. You are quiet. The intellect, mind, body and entire system are quiet. Instead of lying down in shavasana you are sitting in padmasana, that is all.

Is one third of life taken away in sleep?

Yes and sickness takes away more days, so ultimately the balance is nil. In order to make use of this remaining one third of life, the sincere, earnest aspirant should try to achieve the first state of samadhi where everything becomes quiet. You are neither aware of yourself inside nor outside. The mind is not in anahata or vishuddhi, but in sahasrara. It remains there for a number of hours, after which it re-emerges. You practise yoga nidra and the question of sleep is finished.

So the possibility of doing away with sleep is there, but not for the common man. Maybe in the future we shall have a psychic race, when many more will be able to do it.

What is the relationship between the physical, mental and astral body?

As a matter of fact all the bodies are interconnected. These so-called bodies are actually nothing but awareness. They are forms of awareness. The mental body is only a subtler form of awareness. The astral body is on a subtler level still; it is astral awareness. The word 'body' has been used to define it. Suppose you sit for meditation and you become aware of some light. What is it? It is your consciousness, your awareness. Then suddenly the light goes off and you go still deeper. That too is a form of your awareness. When your awareness becomes free from the impressions of outer material life and the physical body, it will become free from the impressions of samskaras and then again from the impressions of previous births, one by one. It will go on becoming subtler and subtler.

While astral travelling, do you travel with some sort of body?

No, it is the awareness which travels. Forget the word 'body', it is only a definition, just as we say that purusha and prakriti are the masculine and feminine powers, but actually they are neither masculine nor feminine. They are just definitions

and when we have a clear-cut idea, we ultimately have to replace the words.

Just now we are sitting here; we have physical awareness. If you close your eyes and start dreaming, you may see your house or your friends, but where is your physical body? It is still here, only you are not aware of it. You are aware of something else. When you are able to dream of future events, that awareness is still subtler. Then again, when you go into meditation and penetrate deep into your inner self, without any awareness of your body, that too is a form of awareness. It is this awareness that at a certain stage goes out travelling. What is that awareness? It is not just a mental projection. It is awareness in the form of an energy, in the form of some subtle moving thing, like the movement of sound.

However, in order to reach this stage, some kind of guidance is necessary. These things are rarely taught and only at the will of a guru. The science of astral travelling and materialization of the body are only handed down to the most reliable people. This knowledge should not be imparted to people unless their karmas are completely worked out and their vasanas are subdued, because it can be misused, just as we misuse money or power. There are some expert tantrics who do not do the travelling themselves, but send out certain forces to create many disturbances.

Can we use study as a spiritual sadhana?

Studying spiritual books is a part of yogic sadhana because it gives you inspiration and at the same time encouragement. Sometimes we get tired of sadhana; the mind wants a change. That is the nature of the mind. So, if you read spiritual books you get inspiration. It is not bad, but there comes a stage in spiritual life when you have to give up all the books. That is a higher spiritual stage, where shastra and scripture hold no truth for you, when your experience can tell you more than the books. That is an important stage and you must know where that stage begins otherwise the scriptures should be studied as a part of spiritual practice.

This is known as swadhyaya. In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* it is written that "tapasya, swadhyaya and devotion to God are the three corollaries of yoga."

Is there any special attitude we should have while studying?

The attitude of a sadhaka should be to read spiritual books in order to inspire himself and to help his battery regenerate. The attitude of a scholar is to go through the books and try to understand and compare them with other texts. It is said that whenever you study the scriptures you must understand that you are studying in order to find the truth, not in order to know something. It is *tattwa darshan*, the experience of the Supreme Essence.

Swamiji, have you ever been to Tibet?

Why, I am part Tibetan! My birthplace is quite close to Tibet. I grew up in a place called Almora where many Tibetans live and have their trade. I have seen Tibetan monasteries and the manuscripts which they use there.

Are the Tibetan books written in Sanskrit or in some other Tibetan language?

A few are in Sanskrit, but most are in Tibetan. They had a very rich literature which dated back to the period of Nalanda University, a place 100 miles from here. This university had three great libraries called the 'Ocean of Knowledge'. Later, the Muslims invaded this university and burned its libraries. Again, the libraries were rebuilt, but the invasions did not stop. They went on, one after another. The Muslims came in great hordes.

At the same time, the Hindus also exploited the opportunity to root out the Buddhists, whom they did not like. So, these monks had to leave the place and most of them went to the Tibetan side with the books. Even before this exodus, many acharyas had gone out to China, Tibet and other countries to spread the spiritual science, but during the

period of exodus, most of the books were taken away by the monks. Nalanda itself had 10,000 monks.

The monks took the books to Tibet where they were preserved and recently, when the Chinese invasion came, the monks came back to India, but the spirit had changed. The monks left India, not in order to safeguard their lives, but to safeguard the knowledge which they carried in the form of books. That was their main purpose. However, when the Tibetan monks returned to India, they brought hundreds of pony loads of gold and other valuables, and very few books. It seemed they preferred gold and diamonds to books.

Of course, the times have changed. When the monks left India for Tibet they knew that food and shelter would be no problem. The selling of food and milk was unheard of in those days. Whenever pilgrims passed through villages they were welcomed and given food. There were no small hotels where food is purchased, therefore the monks could safeguard books, but when they returned to India they had to safeguard their lives, because they knew they could not get food or shelter without money. That is why they brought as much wealth as they could carry and left the books behind.



46

Organization

Lecture Series, 9–21 March 1968

The word organization means ‘co-ordination of the activities of a group of people with a central head in order to achieve a particular aim’. Just as a group of pipes cannot be played unless coordination is brought about with the keyboard, the whole thing becomes an organ, an organization. Similarly, the physical body is an organ in which different members are participating and doing their duties in a coordinated manner under one head which is called the brain.

When we are discussing organization we shall have to understand it in the same way as we understand the activities of the physical body. An organization can only function efficiently if all the members are working in coordination. The actions of each individual must be conveyed immediately to the headquarters, where they are accepted and responded to by this centre.

Even as the physical body is subject to certain limitations when any of its organs or parts are malfunctioning, in the same way, the efficiency of an organization is limited by those members who do not carry out their duties properly.

In the body, for example, the skin is responsible for conducting certain sensations of touch to the brain. If, somehow, the skin loses its sensitivity and is unable to perform this duty, the eyes can help in a limited way by

perceiving the object of touch, but still you will not be able to feel it. You may see that an insect is biting you or a fire is burning you, but unless you can feel these sensations the brain will not respond to them by sending the impulse to the hand to remove it or to drive the insect away. You may manage for some time with the help of the other senses, but it will be necessary to restore the sensation of touch sooner or later. In the same manner, the most important factor in the running of an organization is the field of activities of the different members which will have to be coordinated after the members have been formed.

It is said in the Bible that God created man from a lump of mud and the same thing is said in the Upanishads also. In the course of time, nature brought about perfection in the organization of the human body. So, when I think about the topic of organisation, I feel, why not create an organization in the light of this human body? This body has five karmendriyas, five jnanendriyas, five pranas, four aspects of mind, five elements and one moving spirit. That makes twenty-five aspects. I feel that every organization should have these twenty-four important members and one moving spirit. The duties should be allocated on this basis.

According to this concept of the physical body we can create a social body, yogic or otherwise. That social body should be an exact replica of this physical body. This is the first point about organization which applies, not only to this organization, but to all organizations in general. Those institutions in which this particular view is not developed are not organizations and they do not flourish. They are something like a lame man or a blind man trying to carry on with the work all alone, unassisted: no eyes, no hands, etc. How long can they survive? One year, two years, five years, ten years? Ultimately they will perish. The age in which we are now living is the age of organized institutions.

Here, we should not misunderstand that an organization is a kind of syndicate, because in an organization the different members do not have sole power. The moving spirit

or guiding spirit helps all the other limbs of the body or of the organization, but it does not have unlimited power. Some people feel that as the head of an institution they must have sole power and authority, they must be unchallengeable like the kings of old. This is a misconception. If only one person in a group is running the whole organization, his authority may be unchallenged, but the scope of the organization will be limited and he may not be able to achieve its purpose. However, if he sacrifices some of his authority and allows the other members to also function in the administrative capacity, then he may have limited powers, but the purpose of the organization will be fulfilled.

The necessity of organization

First of all we must understand the need of organization even for spiritual purposes. Many people, due to a lack of expanded vision, feel that those who are spiritual should be removed from the problems of organization. Since organization presupposes an element of ambition, the spiritual aspirant thinks that to subject himself to the problems of organization is opposed to the spirit of sadhana and dhyana. As such, motivated either by his higher ideals or by his mental lethargy, he thinks that the problems of organization are not the problems of spiritual life. However, if you look at spiritual life, you will find that it is nothing but an organized effort and the spiritual person, whoever he may be, is a part of an association or an organization. If any spiritual aspirant tries to exist as an individual, apart from the community, then he is trying to escape from the realities of life.

I personally feel that spiritual life is for the whole world. Therefore, however individualistic the spiritual life of an aspirant might be, it should not be considered separate from the total mass of humanity. I consider that organization is one of the most sublime expressions of a spiritual aspirant. The more organized and disciplined the spiritual aspirant is within himself, the more disciplined and organized will be

his outer expression. The organization is an expression of one's own inner being. So it has been said about the necessity of organization in spiritual life.

How to start an organization?

This is the first and foremost question. Some people think that money comes first and organization next. If anyone has this particular idea in mind he should set it aside. This applies not only to the spiritual institutions, but even to the big companies and factories. Money comes next, but something else comes first and when that something which comes first has been accomplished the money will flow automatically. This has been proved by different groups of people from different places and ages. There are people who go on waiting for big money to come in order to start a business. They go on waiting until their dead body is carried to the burial ground because they believe that money is the most important requisite. This attitude is a complete mistake.

The people who have achieved success in any organization or sphere of life were those who had something besides money, something more important than money. How much money did Christ have? Yet he built an empire. How much money did his disciples, Peter, John, Thomas and the other fishermen, washermen and tillers have? What they had was not money, but a vision which the spirit of people sought in order to establish a highly aimed organization. Money is not the first requisite and no spiritual organization should depend on the primary importance of money. It is true that money is a means, it is necessary and one must have it, but the success of an organization should not depend on money. More important than money is the vision or the aim.

For the development of a higher vision or aim, it is necessary to broaden the outlook by extensive travelling, without any preconceptions or prejudice. That is why it is a tradition in India amongst the sadhus to live the life of a wanderer for a minimum of seven years and a maximum of twelve years. A sadhu should continue to wander on his

own without depending on his master, guardian or anybody else. For several years he keeps on wandering and observing the world like an impartial spectator without making any judgement. Many times our judgement is faulty and we think that everything is wrong or everything is right with the world, due to our likes and dislikes.

In order to recondition the mind, to restructure one's own ideals, it is necessary to keep moving for a certain period of time. After seeing many different countries and cultures one should sit down at one place and think over all one has seen. At that time a vision or an aim should come regarding one's future work. Once the aim becomes clear then a master plan can be chalked out and this plan should be decided on the basis of experience. When the master plan is ready, one should go out for a few months and put it into practice on a small scale, see what the effect is and what the general reception is. If you find that the response is very quick and you don't have to make much effort then you will know that the plan is all right.

Here is a simple example. In 1963, at the time when my guru, Swami Sivananda, left his mortal body I was staying in Munger. I had led a wandering life for many years and I thought, "Now what shall I do? My aim is not fulfilled. I must do something. So, why not take up yoga?" Then I started this small ashram with no money and no preparation whatsoever. Almost immediately I had hundreds of students. People used to come and sleep on the lawn if they did not have a place in the hall. Then I knew that yoga spreads like fire.

After that I tried a counter-method. Instead of teaching yoga, I began to teach a little bit of philosophy. I conducted classes here on *Gita* and *Ramayana*, but the audience was very small. Then I started shankhaprakshalana classes and the people came in great numbers. Then I started sending *Gita* publications to other institutions outside, but they would never reply. However, when I would send ordinary booklets on yoga of fifteen pages, immediately the thanks would come. From all these things I saw that yoga could catch the

human mind and it is very practical for the people living in this age.

This is an example of how we should try out our plans first so that we do not make a big mistake at the end and all of our efforts come to nothing. If we have to make an error we should make it at the beginning. If you build a large ashram costing crores of rupees and nobody comes that is a big loss, but if you just build a small cottage costing one or two thousand rupees and see if the people come or not then you will not waste your time and effort. If you get a good catch then you know people will come.

If your aim is correct and you really understand human psychology people will come. They will have to come from any distance, at any cost, with any inconvenience because they know that it is for their benefit. At this time come the workers, not before that. Before that, there is only one brain which is actually working, but after that you must gather around you a band of workers.

The band of workers

From the time you start your wandering, or even before that, when you become aware of your spiritual aspirations, then you will have to note down the name of every man you meet in your diary. You will have to ask everything about him and give him a little thought, just five minutes or so, in the evening when you are all alone. Note down a few points about him such as: "I met a tall man with a dark complexion, sharp eyes. I asked him this question; he did not reply directly. He has a wife. He works as a clerk." After writing down these things, in a few days you will remember him.

Give a few minutes in your mind for every man you meet, that is all. Only think about his personality, don't decide whether he is useful or not. Sometimes you will find that normal people are useless and abnormal people can be useful. Therefore, no judgement should be passed. You must only remember the person and put him into your subconscious mind. His personality is now in you and it

will go deeper. Then the people you have met during your journey should be remembered or contacted by you at least once a year. Remember, if you are going to do some kind of work you cannot do it alone. It is impossible.

You cannot pick up dedicated workers on the spur of the moment. If you want to do something, you will have to work with people you know and who know you very well. You cannot just go out into the street and call someone to come and do this work for you. It is not possible. The people should be contacted by you again and again. You must keep them in mind and see that they also keep you in mind.

For that purpose I suggest a small booklet which is very simple, not at all conclusive or complete. The purpose of this book is to introduce yourself, as well as the subject, to people. Of course, you can have an expensive publication if you want to with beautiful photographs and nice paper, but that costs a lot of money. When you give it to people they feel obligated to purchase it and some may not want to. However, if a small inexpensive booklet is prepared you can give it to people whom you have met just once, with whom you have had lunch, dinner or tea. You can send it by post and it will remind them of you and also you of them.

Suppose you get a small building and start a yoga school. Then you can publish a small booklet to commemorate the opening of the school. With this event for the background, if the book is sent to a person where you have visited, maybe he will say, "Yes, I know this man. He came to Bombay, Calcutta, Agra, Delhi and Madras, and he was with me. He has written a small book." He goes through the book, but it is not at all complete. It just catches his interest. Then he writes back to say, "I have read your book. It is very nice. Have you got a bigger one? Can you give me some guidance? My brother, sister, husband, etc., is suffering from mental problems. Is there any yogic practice for that?" Your work can begin with this. The book is only a kind of communication between you and that person whom you have met once in your life.

Therefore, it becomes necessary for you to maintain a link with all people, not only in your own country, but elsewhere also. You may not be doing any work outside your country, but it is always better to keep in touch with the people of foreign countries. That has its own benefit so far as your work and your understanding is concerned. Maybe in the future you will want to send one student to Australia. Whatever you do, it is never useless. Sometime or the other it will help you.

So, after fixing or deciding an aim, you will need to have workers. Those workers must be selected from the galaxy of friends whom you have met in the past seven, eight or nine years. Whether they are receptive or unreceptive, yogic or unyogic, positive or negative about you, you must keep them at hand. In this way you will be able to get new contacts. There was one man in Nagpur who didn't impress me at all, but I used to send my literature to him. After some time I sent my student to Nagpur. That man came to meet her and he was so impressed that he placed an order for all the books, even those which were not available. This is how things happen. So, even if a person is not interested in your work, you should not say he is useless. This man may become interested sooner or later. If you talk about the philosophy of yoga for the welfare of mankind, I don't think that anybody will say, "No." Sooner or later he is going to appreciate it.

I feel that the problem of workers is a very acute problem everywhere and it should be given more importance than the problem of money. The first story in Panchatantra is entitled 'How to Make Friends'. Here it is said, "Even if you have no family, no money, no help, you can still succeed in life if you have good friends." I use the word 'friend' for disciple, devotee, admirer, sympathizer, patron and also for one who criticizes. All these come in the category of friends.

This category of friends is something which you should decide with great caution and with absolute understanding. Don't look at the money before you have looked at the men. If you have money and you have no men things will never go right and they will never prosper, but if you have men and

no money the work will still go on. That is sure. I can tell you from the experience of the great men in history. So, in yogic organizations, please remember that after you have finalized your aim and experimented on the blueprint to some extent, if you think that yoga will catch on, then the next thing you must do is set out to find friends.

The structure of an organization

In order to find workers you will have to have a very clear concept of the basic requirements of an organization. The first set of workers required are those who know how to labour, to toil. Those physical toilers represent the hands, feet, sensory organs, digestive and excretory organs. When we say toiler, we do not only mean a typist, we mean a cook also. We do not just mean one who cleans the room, we mean one who looks after the property of the organization.

The first mistake which we make in organization, practically everywhere, is that we try to find a good secretary, a good manager, a good financier, but the cook, the gate-keeper, the builder are not properly kept. As a result the organization does not function for a long time. In an organization it is also necessary to have one person who keeps an eye on all that is taking place and sees that everything is run smoothly and correctly. Supposing the treasurer does not keep the books properly and throws them here and there. It must be the responsibility of someone to bring this to the notice of the management.

Apart from the toilers, there is another important group of workers in the structure of an organization and that is the managing body, the sensitive group of people who are capable of thinking, planning, discussing, pruning and modifying the plan. Those people are known as the managing council or board of directors. In the general system of the organization they form the jnanendriyas and the physical toilers are the karmendriyas.

The third group of workers is still more important and it is called the office bearers. Just as we have four office

bearers in our physical body, *manas* or mind thinks, *buddhi* or intellect decides, *chitta* or consciousness remembers and *ahamkara* or ego presides. So, in every organization these four office bearers should function in exactly the same manner as this *antar karana* or inner instrument is functioning in our physical body, controlling the jnanendriyas and karmendriyas. These office bearers are the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

These four members are very important in an organization. They discuss all the plans before they are executed by the other members. For instance, it was decided that Swami Satyananda should go abroad, so that the International Yoga Teachers' Training Course would be more successful and draw more people from the West. Then the four office bearers have to sit down and discuss the following points: How will he go? How much money will he spend? What countries will he visit? How will he travel? How much time can he spare for each place? Who will organize the programs abroad? However, they will not decide these matters. They will only discuss them and see what are the difficulties, the positive and negative points, etc. They will note it all down. When the whole matter has been discussed and thought over well by the office bearers then it can be brought before the governing body.

The governing body has a very important function and, when an organization is being set up, the members will have to be selected by the moving spirit or the founder. These officers, which include president, vice-president, secretary and joint secretary, should not be selected just because they are president or vice-president of the institution. One of them should have the power to decide properly. The second should have the power to discuss it on the basis of his past experiences. The third one should be able to record it properly and then circulate it to the other members. The fourth one should be the presiding authority on the occasion and should have the power and capacity to stop unceremonial, unconstitutional, irrelevant discussions.

So, these four persons have to be selected first. Out of them, one should be young, two should be experienced and one should command respect. For instance, if I am put on an agenda, although I am not a member of the body of my ashram or anywhere, still I am able to move an agenda. They will have to sign it. So, there should be one respected person, two persons with experience who have seen organizations and who know how to manage finances and other things, and one person should be able to record and communicate what has taken place to the other members so that they are not left in the dark.

After this there are five more people who are very important and in organizational terms we call them patrons. In the physical body they are known as pranas. They give life to the movement, they bring money, they bring you to power and to eminence. These five patrons should be carefully selected. In the physical body these five pranas maintain life, vigour and vitality, so that the body does not die. In the same manner, these five patrons, who are not members of the governing council officially, but are always there unofficially, support and maintain the life of the institution. If the institution is ever in difficulty or need, they will always feel it is their duty to come to its aid.

The patrons must be selected very carefully from a group of people who do not aspire to membership in the governing council. The moment they do, you should remove them. They do not have the capacity for thinking and decision making that the members of the governing council must have. Therefore if the institution is to succeed, they must be carefully separated from the four who decide the policy.

Another important point in every institution and organization is the establishment of a trust. That should always be remembered. If I die tomorrow and there is dissension in the governing body and some of them become greedy, what will they do? They will declare the institution bankrupt and pass a resolution to liquidate it, removing all the movable properties and attaching the unmovable properties to some

other institution. That happens everywhere and many companies are liquidated by very careful and shrewd means. To prevent this from happening a trust is necessary. Anybody could liquidate my society today if it were not a trust.

A trust means that there are certain people selected to act as guardians to the entire organization. Although they are not involved in the organization at all, they are not members of the governing body, they do not even attend the committee meetings, they are the guardians. They will see that the society is not liquidated by unlawful, deliberate means. The constitution, not only in India, but throughout the world, provides this unique feature. The trust does not manage the institution, but it looks after it. It is something like the five *tattwas*, elements, which cannot be seen, but at the same time are everywhere in the physical body. That is the function of the five members who are called the trustees.

Now, the trustees and patrons can be the same and it is always better that way. If you have more patrons then of course they can't all be trustees. The number of trustees should be seven maximum. This is my opinion as far as yoga institutions are concerned. If there are eleven, then there are certain technical difficulties in casting the votes and passing the resolutions. So the number should not be more than seven and not less than five. If there are only three, no decision can be arrived at. There are many institutions in India with only three trustees and they are unable to arrive at any decision.

However, the five trustees and five patrons can be the same which is what I have been doing in my organizations because the patrons, who contribute money from time to time, should be attached to that institution and feel a sense of guardianship so that the institution born from their money is not destroyed. In the constitution of every country the trustees have great power, something like the president in a democratic country, but in the yoga organization the trustees should never be allowed to enter the general management of the institution.

We have spoken about the different components of an organization, but the most important person behind this show is one man who is known as the moving spirit. In him the dream flourishes and the visions come up. His visions are first of all conveyed to the four members of the governing body. They discuss it amongst themselves and then they sit down together with the five patrons and make the final decision. Even if an institution has sufficient funds to carry out a particular plan it is always necessary to refer to the patrons before deciding about any undertaking.

This is very important and many institutions go bankrupt because they fail to observe this policy. They think that because they have 25,000 rupees they can go ahead. However, they should go to the patrons first and allow them to decide it. The patrons everywhere are always very careful about spending money. They will never want to touch the principal amount and that is a good thing. If you ask for funds to make a new building they will tell you to find another way and, since the patrons are also the trustees, the governing body is forced to listen to them.

There are different ways of approaching the patrons. For instance, I decide that the ashram should have a hall and I tell my plan to the four members of the governing body. They talk it over and then they sit down together with the patrons and discuss it all together. At the meeting they will decide, "Yes, a hall is necessary, thirty feet by fifty feet. Later we will tell you how it is to be done." Then there is another scheme or sub-plan where the patrons are asked for unofficial guidance. There is no resolution; nothing is recorded in the minute book. You ask them how to get the required amount and they tell you the methods. For instance, they may say, "All right, you need 30,000 rupees. The best thing is to have a benefit performance, a dance."

Now, one of the nine members will form a sub-committee which will be in charge of arranging the dance performance and hall. When the performance is over and the accounting is finished, say you sold the tickets for Rs. 50,000 and there

is Rs. 25,000 in the balance, then you will have to tell your patrons, “We have Rs. 25,000 balance, but this scheme is for Rs. 30,000.” The patrons are sure to say, “Don’t worry, I will give 5,000.” This is their mentality. The little difference they will make up.

So, when the plan has been passed and the money has been arranged, then the first group, the toilers, start the construction. That is their duty. In this manner, the five toilers, the five managers, the four executives with one man at the centre, the five patrons, and the five trustees make a complete organization. So, when you return to your country, you will have to seek out the toilers, the thinkers, the planners, the financiers, the guardians and of course, you are the moving spirit.

The moving spirit

The most important person in every organization, whether spiritual, political or otherwise, is always one man. You can consider him to be the spirit behind the whole drama. As long as he is alive his personality is the moving spirit. After he dies, it is his philosophy which is the moving spirit. Therefore, in order to perpetuate the organization, it has always been a tradition to accept a moving spirit, whether he is living or dead. When the philosophy of the moving spirit disintegrates, not only a small organization, but even nations disintegrate.

So, the moving spirit of an organization is the person who has realized the vision, who has got a plan, who wants to do certain kinds of things. The moving spirit is not a guardian, he is not a member, he is not a director, he is not a toiler – he is only the inspirer. The moving spirit should have one important quality, that is the capacity to inspire. With absolute patience and perseverance, he should bring the necessity and utility of what he has been thinking to the people. It is also very necessary for the moving spirit to move physically for some time amongst different people and inspire them to understand what he wants to fulfil.

The moving spirit should always have a master plan, however difficult it may be for him to implement and put into practice. Swami Vivekananda was a moving spirit and therefore he could do great things. He opened a small centre of Vedanta, but more than that, he inspired people to something which he had realized. In the same manner, many missionaries who go to underdeveloped countries in Africa and in other places to open hospitals, schools and the like, are inspired by the moving spirit of Christ. That spirit in which they believe inspires them so much that they in turn inspire others to believe. As a result this inspiration becomes epidemic.

There are many things in this world which are epidemic, but inspiration is most epidemic. You know how the Christian missionaries have spread Christianity throughout the world, how it has taken everybody into its fold. In the same way, the inspiration which you give to people in regard to yoga will also become an epidemic. That is one of the most important points which the moving spirit has to take up first. He should not limit himself to a group of four or five members. He has a different duty to perform. He has the ideas and the plan, and in order to fulfil them he must keep inspiring people.

That inspiration which he gives to people is not the common type. It is to arouse in them an abiding desire to lead a higher life. Suppose I go to Gondia and stop at Muzaffapur on the way. There are hundreds of people there who want to learn asana and pranayama. I cannot teach all of them, so what do I do? I inspire them. I awaken their dormant desire for spiritual life. This is one of the most important tasks of the moving spirit.

In the beginning, when I used to move from place to place, I used to think, "What is this? I go from Gondia to Calcutta, Calcutta to Bombay, Bombay to Madras, Madras to Nagpur, Nagpur to Delhi, Delhi to Allahabad, Allahabad to Benares, Benares to Munger and Munger to Bhagalpur to meet people. I give classes for three days and so many

people come. After I go, many more people come to know because the inspiration continues even in my absence,” but at first I did not know this. I thought it was just a show and sometimes I did not like this show, but when I realized its aftereffects on the human personality and on human behaviour within the family and the society, I understood the importance of inspiring the people. Even though they learned very little about yoga, only a few asanas, a little pranayama and dhyana, and all that imperfectly, still that brought about a change in their life.

It used to happen and even now it happens, after I leave a place, a man comes to know that I was leading a small class and says, “Ah, why didn’t you tell me?” Until then his spiritual desire was dormant. The moment he heard of the class, for which I was the instrument as well as the efficient cause, his sleeping spiritual desire woke up and he became a seeker. So, this moving spirit in the mission of yoga should be one who can awaken a spiritual thirst, who can inspire a band of seekers, because the purpose is to awaken the seeker in man.

Everybody is seeking something, everybody is a seeker. So, that particular desire will have to be aroused and this is the master key of your mission. Unless the moving spirit fulfils this one condition, all is useless. He won’t be able to do anything because it is through these seekers, it is for these seekers, it is with these seekers that the movement will flourish. If they are seekers, they will come to you, they will learn. If they are seekers, they will call you and you will teach them. If they are seekers, they will sympathize with your mission and they will help you financially or materially.

The first and foremost thing that comes to you after receiving information that you are the moving spirit is a band of seekers who seek the knowledge which you are propagating. Therefore, I suggest that when you have developed a kind of inspiring ideal for yourself and you have realized that you have ambitions to start a mission, then the first thing you should do is to clarify the position, the form,

the nature, the limitations and the most apparent things about your philosophy and mission. It must be clear to the people wherever you go.

When the people ask you, "What do you do?" the answer should be ready. Of course, it should be a very sincere and honest reply, not a foolish reply. If a drunkard asks you what you have come for don't tell him you have come to teach yoga. He will not understand that. You must tell him, "You see, there are many people who are suffering from mental conflicts and tensions, and due to that they have developed an evil habit. I can help them." That is a reply he can welcome.

So, this kind of quick response is important and, of course, it should be very sincere and honest at the same time. Wherever you go you must be ready. You may be sitting in a hotel and someone will ask you, "What do you do?" You will have to say, "I am a yoga teacher. I teach asana, pranayama and meditation." Then they may say, "What is your meditation? I am Christian, or Muslim, or Hindu and I do my own." Then you must reply, "I am not talking about religious meditation. I am talking about a practice by which you can find out the errors of your own personality and thereby help yourself."

If this kind of sincere and earnest idea is imparted to them, then they will become seekers, but if you get ten such seekers and decide to go ahead with them, giving them the final blueprint and layout for their search, your mission will be blocked. If you sacrifice the seeking spirit of those ten and go on to inspire many more, then the general interest in yoga will grow. Those ten may lose the spiritual chance you could give them, but always remember, the search begins, continues and concludes almost independently. It is the inspirer who is important in this field and therefore you have to do everything to inspire more and more people to the path of yoga and then give them guidance also.

Every day I receive many letters from Bombay, Rishikesh, Calcutta. They say, "I want to come to you. I want to learn

yoga.” I tell them, “Go to a local teacher.” In this way I am not only inspiring them, I am encouraging them to act independently as well.

Conducting programs

It is easy to imagine a great tour, but it is not so easy to actualize as is generally thought. There are many difficulties and all of these will have to be overcome, not only in one visit, but in different visits. When you begin to tackle this problem practically, you will find that each time you visit a centre, the old problems are being solved and new problems are coming up. As such, there are a few methods regarding the dissemination of yoga that should be constantly remembered.

First of all, you should be able to speak to the people in the centre about things which will give them peace of mind, encouragement and an optimistic philosophy. The aim which you reveal to them in your conversation should be fragrant with tranquillity and inspiration. Everything you do, beginning with your letters and following with your literature, including the names you have selected for your books and the way you meet your old or new friends, should consciously or unconsciously present to them an aura of peace and rest. If this condition is kept before your mind and you are able to fulfil it, I can assure you that everything in your organization will grow spontaneously. Therefore, whenever you decide on a program for your branches or units, the aims and objectives you cast for them or for yourself should present an unconscious and unnoticed aura of peace and rest. Whether it is East or West, everybody is unconsciously aspiring for peace and rest.

Once you have decided to undertake a tour of your country to enlighten the people and to prepare the ground for a future mission, there are certain things which you must do. First of all you should give small demonstrations, classes and discussions. Second, you should publish a small paper on the practical utility of yoga. Third, you should

conduct programs on TV or radio, publish small articles in magazines, conduct classes at your place, suggest to your students and friends a book on yoga instead of a doctor during a mental crisis. You must try to make use of each person and see how you can get yoga into his life. By these methods it will become possible for you to prepare the ground for your moving mission.

When the time comes, you may say to your friends from the Rotary or Lions Club, or whatever association they may belong to, that you are going to a particular town and you wish to have the opportunity to meet branches there and, if possible, could they introduce you. In the West, the best time to propagate yoga is during the summer months when people go on holidays to sea resorts. If a few yoga teachers from different countries meet together at that time, they can do a lot of work amongst these people. During these summer vacations, you can meet different kinds of people at the seashore. After that you can visit the towns from where you have received an invitation.

If I meet you at the seashore we may discuss all about India or about that country, about yoga, religion and so on. Ultimately it will come to the point of what work I do. I will have to reply very clearly that I teach yoga. Whenever I am invited I give classes in meditation, asanas, pranayama, yoga nidra. Just by looking at a person, you can tell if he is a spiritual type or not, then you must speak to him in the right way. A few invitations to visit different places will be a nice beginning for you.

Then, when you have fixed up a few places for your visits, you will have to think about what kind of program you are going to give to your students. The aspirants belong to different categories. Some people do not want asana and pranayama, others want only asana and pranayama and nothing else. Some people do not want to learn yoga in the way you have been teaching; they want some kind of idealistic and philosophical way. Some people think that yoga is a topic for discussion – it should be understood,

but it should not be practised. There are also people who believe that yoga should only be practised and it should not be discussed. You have to decide quickly what kind of group you have, so that they do not fight with each other. Then you have to decide the program.

There are some centres where you can just teach meditation once in a week in a particular manner and it will succeed, but the same program may not succeed everywhere. So, you will have to write down in your diary a number of programs that you can suggest and prepare combinations from, according to the age and mentality of the group. If it is a club for boys or girls, what are you going to give, what practices are necessary? Much depends on the presentation, therefore the techniques should be practised beforehand. An important point to remember while teaching yoga to different people is to select practices, not only according to their needs, but according to their capacity also. Your student might be suffering from heart disease.

In western countries it is the asanas which are most important and in India it is the kirtans. No meeting, no satsang, whether in secular or non-secular places, can begin without kirtan. Whether the president, the military commander or a mahatma comes; whether a spiritual meeting or an agricultural plan is to be inaugurated, there must be kirtan. In the West, however, it is up to you to decide how the program is to be conducted, but asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha will form the basis of it.

Now, if you want your mission to be accepted by the people, you will have to first visit clubs, and finally, not initially, you will have to go to educational institutions and give demonstrations. If possible, you should make a short film of all the asanas and pranayamas. When you give a demonstration it does make an impression, but a film makes a much better impression. This is my experience. I used to take a small film with me wherever I went and I found it very helpful. One thousand feet takes about 55 minutes. If you are going to give an introductory talk beforehand and invite

questions and answers after the film, you must be prepared to give a two hour program.

Alternatively, you can make a series of short films about 15–20 minutes each. The first day you can show the pawanmuktasana group, second day – vajrasana group, third day – major asanas, fourth day – pranayama and shatkarmas. This gives the opportunity to see the whole system in detail. How the films should be produced and what items they should contain all depend upon your decision and your means. If you have more facilities you can produce one film for people who have stiff joints, another film for children, another film for housewives, another film for executives, another film for people with digestive problems, etc.

If it is not possible for you to make a film then you can use slides. You can show asanas, pranayamas and even chakras with the help of slides. The first slide can show the petals, the second the bijaksharas, the third the colours and uses, the fourth the beeja mantras and so on. In this way a subject can be presented to them very impressively. People are also much more receptive if the films or slides are shown in the dark. In that way you are able to avoid the supremacy of intellectuals over others and the subconscious mind will accept the ideas much more easily.

This is a very simple method by which the knowledge can be given and you will see that those people will call you again and again. Not only that, one person out of fifty will say, “Well, why don’t you come to give a program in my town?” Then you can fix up the program and a further program will follow on from there. This is how the knowledge has to be disseminated, in accordance with human psychology, not against it. The success of your organization depends not so much on the subject you teach, but on the way you teach, taking into consideration the needs of human psychology.

Yoga training

In a yoga organization the important things are yoga training, publications, camps, correspondence and initia-

tions. These things come under the direction of the yoga teacher himself. It is not necessary that the teacher of the school be a moving spirit, he may be and he may not be, but he will have to look after these five duties. Other matters are the business of the management, but these five things should be guided and decided by him.

The first thing is yoga training. It is very difficult to decide how the training should be given. If you want to give training to many individuals, you will have to take them altogether in a group of 10, 20 or 30. I used to take groups of 200 to 300 also. Some people might be learning yoga just for the sake of knowledge, others for the maintenance of health and others for higher spiritual purposes. So the yoga classes should be taught in such a manner that the teacher is able to fulfil the needs of each individual and at the same time maintain the level of group interest. Usually an institution will have one teacher. It can have more also, but in the beginning it is better to have only one so that confusion is avoided.

If you are teaching 30 to 40 students at a time, what are you going to teach them? If you are teaching pawanmuktasana, some of the students who already know a few asanas will think they are wasting time. If you teach advanced asanas, the old people might get heart palpitation, backache, neck ache and so on. If you teach surya namaskara, everybody will have muscular pain by the third day and a few heart patients or allergy patients might not come back at all. They might tell others not to come also.

Therefore, you will have to make sure that the aspirants who come to learn yoga completely set aside all the preconceived notions which they have in their minds. One student may think, "I will go to learn yoga from him and he will teach me all the major asanas." Then, when you start teaching pawanmuktasana, he won't like it. So, right from the beginning, you will have to make it very clear that what you are teaching is not the final phase of yoga, it is just the first session and after that other sessions will follow. In this way, the students will have an opportunity to learn the entire

method systematically over a period of time. They should not expect to learn everything from A–Z on the first day.

The general tendency of all students is to want to learn everything within seven days. However, that tendency has to be checked by making the student aware of why he should not do it. If your student compels you to teach him major asanas or advanced asanas, you must tell him, “No, I will not teach you whatever you like. I will teach you according to the system and according to your need.” There must be absolutely no compromise. Once a student said to me, “Swamiji, I want to do sirshasana.” I replied, “Go to the market place and do it.” He said, “I want to do it here.” I replied, “No, you cannot do it here.” So, there was a bit of discussion and argument.

The next day when he came, I told him, “If you want to do sirshasana, it is better that you don’t come here. You should never do these things.” He said, “But I already do it and I don’t get any bad result.” I replied, “That cannot be decided in three days. That can be decided only when you grow old, when your eyesight begins to fail. First I must find out whether your brain is capable of adapting to the pressure, whether you are a blood pressure or heart patient, if your father has minus or plus eyesight. After knowing all these things, I will decide. I won’t teach you so quickly. If you are so keen, you had better not come here.”

In this way I used to put them off and suppress them. Sometimes I would continue with the practice of pawanmuktasana for several years. I didn’t teach sirshasana to more than a dozen people. I know all the practices of pranayama, bhastrika, surya bheda, moorcha, but I didn’t teach them. Some people used to say, “Swamiji, you are only teaching some kind of preparatory exercises.” I replied, “Of course, you are only fit for that. You come to me for three years consecutively, then I will teach you many more things.” That brought about a certain amount of dissatisfaction, no doubt, but it helped to avoid accidents which would have been much more negative for the aspirants.

I found that there are two categories of people who come for yoga training. There are those who just come to you casually to learn yogasana or pranayama and then go away. They don't remember you and they expect you to remember them. That type of person is only concerned about his health and you should just teach him what he requires for maintenance of health. There is no need to go into the higher aspects of yoga.

However, there is another type of aspirant who comes to you, not only for learning asana, pranayama and meditation, but who comes with the force of an unseen attachment. This is the second type of person which you will have to understand very quickly. The first types are called students and the second types are disciples or devotees. After they have finished their course, they will come and help you. You do not have to call them. These people, who are devoted to your cause, or who have some kind of attachment to you, are called devotees. This is the type of person you can bank on and this is the type which will help you at any time in the future, in your organization, mission, movement or any cause. Therefore, your attitude towards these two types should be specified and well-explained. If you want the first type of students to come to you just to learn a few asanas, then you must be aware of their nature. They will be so close to you during the first course, but the moment it finishes, they will forget you. Even if you invite them for the next session, they may only come once or twice, because they don't understand anything beyond their selfish interest.

So, it is the duty of the acharya to find out which people are useful and make it known to the governing body and to the members of the committee. For instance, the principal of a school used to come here for learning asanas. Afterwards he used to come regularly. Sometimes he brought milk, sometimes he brought bananas. So, I gave his name to the governing body. I said, "He is a useful man, a devotee and he can be utilized." This is how the discovery has to be made by

the acharya. The members of the governing body, secretaries and managers, treasurers and cashiers cannot do it.

Now, according to the situation, you will have to decide what type of yoga training program you are going to conduct. Here in Munger, I give one type. In Bombay I am going to try another method. In Europe I don't know what method you will try, because there people have limited time. So, according to the place where you are teaching, you have to decide whether you should make the course for one week, one month, three months or six months. Either you can give classes once a week or every day. In the summer season you can give yoga camps which can extend up to three months or more.

Lessons should be prepared according to the normal limitations of people, not looking to the most capable people. If a person comes to you with many limitations, you must place him in category A, category B, category C or category D. The categories should be decided in a particular way, for example, people having cardiac disorders, whether physical or psychological, or maybe cardiac asthma, palpitations or some kind of arrhythmia, can all be placed in one category. The second category can be people with digestive disorders, third category for constipation, fourth category for insomnia, fifth category for exhaustion, sixth category for muscles and joints, seventh category for obesity, etc. You may need 20–25 categories. You will have to think it over and then decide the entire course for each category.

In the beginning it will be difficult, but later on it will become easier. The asanas are practically the same for each group, but they are taught a little bit differently. For a person suffering from constipation, you have pawanmuktasana, tadasana, yogamudrasana and shashankasana, but the practices are done more quickly and you can finish with him in two weeks. A person suffering from heart disease may do similar practices, but very slowly over a period of six months. A young boy suffering from blood impurity may complete the course in about one and a half months, whereas an old

man who has respiratory problems as well may take up to six months to complete the course.

So, the difference is mainly in speed and also in the arrangement of the asanas. For example, suppose a person cannot practise *supta vajrasana*, you will have to teach him *ushtrasana*. Maybe he will not be able to do either *supta vajrasana* or *ushtrasana*, then you will have to find a suitable practice according to his limitations. *Chakrasana*, for instance, is an excellent practice for replacement of the uterus, but how many people can do it? Therefore, you must know the arrangement of the asanas and their preparatory exercises for the different categories. Every asana has its preparatory sequence. This is how asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha are taught.

I used to work out many different lessons for the heart, for the stomach, for insomnia, etc. I would write them all down in my diary and slowly I used to type them. Those lessons formed the basis and then I used to prepare a new chart for each new person by substituting or adding a few practices. Suppose a lady came to me complaining of insomnia. First I would see the chart: *nadi shodana pranayama*, *trataka*, *yoga nidra*, *surya namaskara*. Then I would have to see if the lady is capable of doing these things or not. If so, it was all right, otherwise I would have to adjust her program by substituting a few practices that she could do.

After teaching many classes myself, I tried another method of teaching. In one particular session I used to take only old, emaciated people with their whole body trembling. They could not even do *pawanmuktasana*. I took sixteen to thirty of them for fifteen days in a month, however I never taught them. I got local teachers who knew *pawanmuktasana* to do it. They would all sit down on the lawn and practise. Then, if some people wanted guided meditation, I would give a course on that for fifteen days, but I didn't teach it. The teachers all came from Munger locality. I used to give them some preparation and then they would take the class.

I also conducted general classes. So, there were two types of classes: general and specific. At first I used to divide the month into two sessions: fifteen days general course and fifteen days specific course. Later on, however, I conducted both together. I would start in the morning with the general class from five to seven and after that the specific course from seven to nine. That proved to be very successful. In this way I could up take up to 150 students for each fifteen day session. Many teachers used to come to give classes and I would write down detailed instructions for each one before the class. My prescription book was always at hand.

Sometimes the whole day would be filled with classes from morning to evening. In the morning they were given classes from five to seven and from seven to nine. Then I used to tell the people who were interested in yoga nidra to come between twelve and two o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening those who wanted to learn Gita could come between four and six o'clock, and those who wanted to learn trataka could come between six and eight o'clock. In that way I used to take different groups all day and so many people would come.

So, yoga training plays an important part in an organization because that is the main aim for which the organization has been set up. Therefore, an organization is a means and the yoga training is the end. The organization is founded only in order to provide the opportunity for giving training in yoga. Then come the publications.

Publications on yoga

In dealing with the subject of publications there are several things to keep in mind. First of all, the initial publications should not be printed in a press as that is very costly. They should be cyclostyled or duplicated for the trainees so that they can have a written course of guidance. In the beginning, the publications should be practical, particularly for the students, and you should strictly avoid general publications which do not impart personal guidance. The philosophy of yoga, the necessity of yoga, and all these things should

be kept back because they require two things: first of all the readers and second the money to publish them, and of course there are many accompanying problems. Sometimes, when people have money, they print books, but it becomes very difficult to sell them and even if you are able to sell them you only have the money and not the people. So, the publications should be instructive at first and later on, when you are more established, you can bring out publications on the theoretical aspects of yoga, which will be meant for sales.

The publication of books should be properly organized. You must have a committee of about half a dozen people who are in charge of typing, editing and printing of publications. Out of that group there should be one person who is in charge of writing or taking down the notes from you. He should have a very clear understanding that he is not writing a book, but he is only noting down instructions, that is all. That committee should take up the work of making publications available to the students at the cost which they pay in the form of fees. The students should understand very clearly that you are giving them the book against the admission charge. Then your publications will have more value and will be considered more practical. These practice manuals should only be given to those students who have undergone the training, not to anybody who asks for them.

People often have a kind of mania for producing first class publications, but in the beginning you must look to the practical utility and to your limitations as well, rather than going into the great beauty of the publications. There is a publication in India, a monthly magazine, which has a circulation larger than *Life* magazine or *Time* magazine. Its printing is very ordinary, its paper is very ordinary, yet it has so many subscribers. This magazine is called *Kalyaana* and it is printed from Gorakhpur. *Kalyaana* only deals with the problems of spiritual life. It does not contain anything else. Yet people like the spiritual guidance so much that they don't care what type of paper or what type of printing is used. People in every home have been preserving that magazine

for the last sixty years. Even in my almirah you will find it in bound editions. Other magazines I throw here and there, but that one I keep because it is very valuable. So, this brings us to the truth about publications which is that content is more important than appearance.

Correspondence

Correspondence plays an important part in an organization. A team of people should be set aside for this purpose. You will receive many letters asking for books which you do not have. You can reply to them, "I am sorry, I don't have the book." There will be people who write to ask you, "Can you teach me the method of awakening kundalini?" You must simply answer, "No, I cannot." There will be people who send seventy-page letters which are very tiresome to read, but some reply must be sent. Then letters come asking all kinds of foolish questions. Some of those letters can be thrown in the waste basket, although in general, I would say that every letter should be answered. You will receive hundreds of letters saying, "I want to come to meet you." You may say, "Come", you may say, "Don't come." These are the things which you have to decide, keeping yoga before you.

Regarding people who want detailed information about kundalini yoga, kriya yoga or any other yoga, you can simply reply, "I received your letter and was pleased to know about your interest in kriya yoga. However, it is necessary to make a personal contact as this information cannot be conveyed in a short letter. Please let me know when you can come to meet me." Usually the reply does not come, but you must have one publication ready for such people. It should be a small book of about twenty pages on the utility of yoga, so that by seeing it a person will come to know that yoga can benefit his personal problems. If you tell someone, "Look, you have your own physical and mental problems, why do you worry about kundalini yoga?" He will not like it, but if he reads the same thing in a book, he will say, "Yes, I have got stomach ache, I have got constipation, I cannot sleep at

night. I should fix up these problems first, then I can think about kundalini yoga.” He will definitely come to you as a student, you can be sure of it.

Usually the correspondence is too long. When I receive long letters, it is so tedious to finish them. So, if you want a particular letter to have an effect on the receiver, you should cut out everything that is unnecessary. If the bare minimum points are contained in a letter of ten or fifteen lines, the receiver will quickly understand what you want to say. So, letter writing is an art in itself and, if you are a good correspondent, it is sure that your letter will bring you the desired gains.

The key to success

Many people feel that it is very difficult to set up an organization, but it is not. To set up an organization is not to set up a mission, but to bring together a few people who could set up a mission. Therefore, if you have a particular mission in view, you must set up an organization first. Then you must allow the organization to function by itself. Your role is simply to decide its plan, its program and its policy. All the other functions and duties should be entirely left to the organizers. He who organizes does not become part of the organization. This is the most important point to remember all throughout.

If you have set up an organization and later on you become part of the organization, then you will not be able to fulfil your mission. Sometimes there is a mistaken notion that he who sets up an organization either becomes the president or the secretary of that organization. Then what happens? The purpose of the mission is completely lost and the noble aim is not fulfilled.

The aim of an organization is the most important thing. If the aim of a yoga organization is to disseminate yoga, then everything that is done should be centred around that idea, but you yourself should not be involved in the work, you should just watch that it is going in the right direction.

There are two important aspects of an organization. One is the practical side of teaching and the other is propagation or publicity. If you have a school of yoga which teaches, that is all right, but you must have a wing which keeps on propagating that idea. If this particular point is missed then the institution will not be successful. Both teaching and propagation are necessary, otherwise you will teach yoga to the same 200 people every year or else you will go on propagating yoga, but you will not be able to teach it to anyone. Therefore, in order to be a successful organizer, you will have to take care of the practical side as well as the publicity side.

There are many yoga teachers who want to start a yoga movement in their country, but they don't succeed. They want to make money, but it doesn't come. They want name and fame, but it doesn't come. They want knowledge and realization, but it doesn't come. They want to develop their institution, but they cannot. They want to march ahead, but they cannot decide in which direction they should go. Therefore, I think that the yoga institutions are gradually diminishing. Many yoga teachers have reached a stage where they have to seek some profession for making their livelihood. The cause for this failure will have to be studied and understood by you if you want to succeed in your organization.

The purpose of those people who take up the path of yoga teaching is not fulfilled. It means that somewhere there is some mistake in the organization and the mistake is this. Each man wants to carry the whole burden of the organization on himself. He will do the correspondence himself, the accounting himself, everything from cooking to booking he will do himself. That is one of the causes of failure. He does not allow anybody else to impart, to give or to dedicate his interest.

In every organization you will have to be very careful about who leads the departments and, before taking in a new person, you will have to check him properly. All that is understood, but after all, you must believe that there are

other people in the world who can do that job besides you. You cannot say, "Only I can look after the correspondence or cash or teaching; nobody else knows as much as I know." But that attitude is there, whether you express it or not, and that is the main reason for failure, when you become the organization.

At the same time you will have to remember that the people whom you take into the general structure of the organization are to be tested, not only by you, but also by the people with whom they have to work. For instance, if you take in a person who is meant to do the marketing for your organization, he may be good as far as you are concerned, but what about the department which he is working for. They also must be satisfied with him.

So, you will need to have a very broad view of the organization and then you will have to interest others in the work, giving them the complete idea. Supposing I decide that a seminar should be held in Munger, but I do not work out the details. I ask three persons from outside to work them out. Then these three persons set up a committee which has to work out the arrangements. Now the whole responsibility is off me, it is off the secretary, it is off the governing body. Those three people will manage it. They will have to discuss the matter and then seek co-operation from other persons. If there is any difficulty, then they will again have to discuss the matter with the chief or the governing body or the secretary.

However, the point is that, although the idea of the seminar is born of one man, the idea of a camp is born of one man, the idea of a publication is born of one man, it has to be carried out by many others. You must see that others do it and not you. In an organization this is the key to success. The work must be done by others, not by you. You must just go on observing and surveying whether the work is being done properly or not, that is all. The most important point, and perhaps the key to organizations, is that the chief is capable of getting others to do the work. If he has not got

the capacity to get work done through others, he will never be able to organize anything. It is better that he should accept that he cannot organize.

However, if you can get the work done through a servant against his wishes, or if you can get something purchased by a man against his wishes, you are a good organizer. Swami Sivananda used to say that an organizer can get any work done through others, he just has to see that they do it. Then it can be decided whether he is a good organizer or not. For instance, if I give you a particular department, you should not come to me every now and then about your problems. You should just finish off the work, right or wrong, but don't tell me anything about it. Such a person is qualified to set up an organization.

Therefore, I think that an organizer should have infinite confidence in himself, and then he will have infinite confidence in others. If I have no confidence in myself, I will not have any confidence in you either, because my confidence in you is a projection of my own self. When I have no confidence, I think that nobody can do this work. These people will make so many mistakes. They may lose the money or throw it away somewhere or they may not be honest. So, the first requirement of an organizer is self-confidence and the second is trust or belief in others. Then if you set up a central organization, it will be successful.

A home base

You must have your own place in your own country and you must develop it, but at the same time you should have a central base, just as this school is the home base for many organizations, even though we are not actually connected. They have their own finance, their own trust, their own members, their own way of thinking. They are not under me at all, but still this is their home. So, there should be one central base for all the yoga organizations, where they can come once a year or once in two years and where they can send people whenever they like.

If, for any reason, your institution is faced with difficulties and it is not able to function, this home base will think about its future. Many institutions close because the organizers have to go somewhere, or they become ill, or some financial problems arise. Naturally the members will not be able to continue with the work because they are not interested. They are only working because you are working. At that time, it is the home base, which is not exactly a constitutional centre, but which is interested, that will take steps to help your institute survive.

Suppose a school of yoga loses its following and ceases to function properly. Everything is there, but the students are not coming. Perhaps the publicity is weak and it comes to my notice. I do not say, "That is not my institution; it has its own trust." No, I will send some people there and I will hold a seminar or a convention. We will join together and see that thousands more people come to know about this institution and again the interest will be revived. Therefore, the secret behind the success and the long life of an organization is to be able to work independently, but at the same time, to set up a guardian institution which will be able to aid and guide you in times of difficulty.





The satsangs of a realized master are a gift that inspires and blesses all who receive his wisdom and grace. During the 1960s and 1970s Swami Satyananda's yoga courses at the Bihar School of Yoga and touring throughout India yielded a wealth of spiritual teachings spanning a vast range of subjects. Renowned for their depth of insight, clarity and compassion, the eternal truths revealed in these satsangs are presented in the *Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati* for the upliftment of seekers everywhere.

Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati: Volume I is a compilation of satsangs given in 1967 during the nine-month teacher training course held at the Bihar School of Yoga. Esoteric subjects including rebirth, superconsciousness, thought transmission, the aura and pranic healing are discussed simply and frankly. Practices including hatha yoga, kriya yoga, prana vidya and meditation are described. Social topics such as ethics, marriage, education, ahimsa and crime are thoughtfully and practically explored. Swami Satyananda's teachings are characterized by simple language, profound insights, deep intelligence and compassion for humanity.



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